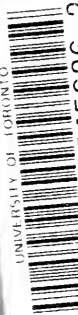
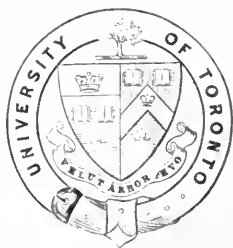


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PETER PAUL RUBENS,

HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.





PETER PAUL RUBENS,

HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. WAAGEN,

PROFESSOR OF THE FINE ARTS AND DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL  
GALLERY AT BERLIN, AUTHOR OF "ART AND ARTISTS IN ENGLAND."

BY

ROBERT R. NOEL, ESQ.

EDITED BY MRS. JAMESON.

157564  
20 / 2 / 24

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

MDCCCXL.

LONDON :  
IBOLSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS,  
SAVOY-STREET, STRAND.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD FRANCIS EGERTON,

*This Translation*

OF

DR. WAAGEN'S ESSAY

ON

THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF RUBENS

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED.



## PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

---

THE Author of the following Essay, Dr. Waagen of Berlin, is already favourably known in this country by his work on "Art and Artists in England." In Germany he has the highest reputation, not only as a learned *virtuoso*, skilled in technical connoisseurship, but as an accomplished scholar, and an enlightened and philosophical critic on all subjects connected with art.

The Essay on Rubens appeared originally in Von Raumer's "Historisches Taschenbuch," for 1833, under the title "Ueber den Maler, Petrus Paulus Rubens;" but Dr. Waagen has since made considerable manuscript

emendations and additions, which have been incorporated with the text, and it is now published for the first time in an enlarged and corrected form. Dr. Waagen's visit to England enabled him to add a variety of criticisms on celebrated pictures now in this country, which will be especially interesting to the English reader. The translation will be found most faithful to the sense and spirit of the original. The Editor has ventured to add a few notes of no value whatever to the artist or the connoisseur, but not perhaps without interest and amusement for the mere amateur. Some pictures have been added to the specimens noticed in the text, always keeping in view that the object of the work was to give a catalogue of the pictures of Rubens, only so far as they illustrated certain general principles.

Neither our English artists nor our English public are as yet accustomed to that *many-sided* and elevated spirit in criticism with which the Germans have long been familiar : we have among us good judges, excellent artists ; and if not richer in the possession of renowned works of art than our continental neighbours, it is our peculiar advantage as a people, that

such works are more generally diffused through the country and among individuals, than in any other European state. Yet what is the general feeling for art in this country? What shall be said of that torrent of shallow conventional verbiage which is poured upon us from day to day and from year to year, and which calls itself *criticism*? True, there are worthy exceptions to this sweeping censure :\* but, on the whole, the present state of criticism and patronage in this country, the one being dispensed by newspapers, the other by booksellers, may be pronounced fatal to the diffusion of any high and general principles in art, or in the taste for art. To know *what* a picture represents, and with what degree of propriety and success it is represented, may be sufficient critical skill for the consideration of nine-tenths of the pictures which yearly cover the walls of our Academy ; but to enable us to appreciate the creations of genius, and to reap all the pleasure and improvement which art can bestow, we must go far higher and far deeper.

Dr. Waagen begins by repudiating the common

\* The critiques on art, for instance, which appear from time to time in the Athenæum, are written in a finer spirit than is usual.

mode of considering a work of art as “the chance product of certain arbitrary circumstances, rather than the faithful and striking expression of the individual mind which produced it:” in other words, he sends us to study and recognise in the works of the painter the impress of the nature which God gave him, and to seek in his nature the solution of those peculiar and, at first, unaccountable characteristics, expressed in the conception and execution of his works. What we call the *style* of a painter is not merely the manner in which he has executed with his pencil certain subjects, but the soul of the man made sensible to the reflecting and philosophical observer in the product of his hand.

To illustrate this grand and fundamental principle of aesthetic criticism, Dr. Waagen has chosen “Rubens, his Life and Genius:” and could not, as it seems to me, have made a happier choice of a subject for this especial purpose; for although, to the contemplative mind and eye, the individuality of every great and original genius in art is manifested in his works, in none is this more conspicuous than in Rubens: in none is the principle so capable of intelligible



and popular illustration. His pictures are well known, widely scattered, easily referred to in galleries or engravings, and in general easily comprehended ; while they exhibit in every part the stamp of his own individual mind and temperament in a manner more decided, and, if I may say so, in one sense of the word, more *artless*, than in any other instance that could have been selected.

People begin to doubt—as indeed they well may doubt!—whether Sir Joshua Reynolds could have been in earnest when, lecturing in his place as President of the Royal Academy, he assured his auditors that any one among them might become a great artist, if he chose, by dint of study, labour, perseverance, and certain rules of art. Truly, a “ comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it ! ”—also *against* it: for by what process, academic or other, shall we bestow genius? and without genius what is the artist? Of the depravation and perversion of genius we hear enough; of its sins and of its sorrows. A dangerous gift it is, but also a *divine* gift, for which there can be no substitute. Let us not try to persuade the young into foolish mistakes on this point,

nor, for purposes miscalled moral or useful, tamper with the essential truth of things. Let the pupil be told, for his encouragement, of the marvels which study and labour *can* do: let him also learn, for his guidance and warning, what they *cannot* do. Let us, once for all, take Dr. Johnson's advice, and "clear our minds of cant," artistic as well as moral and conventional; and let the world know, (what indeed it does *know*, though it tries to believe otherwise,) that not the best good-will, with all aids and appliances, and sixteen hours a day of labour to boot, will suffice to make Michel Angelos and Titians and Rubenses;—that for them we must go to God and nature, and be thankful when, from age to age, such are vouchsafed to us.

Genius being there, inborn and heaven-bestowed, education may indeed develope it; circumstances may determine the form, and physical temperament give the colour to its manifestations; but if there *be* the inborn original power, the spirit of the *man* will be the spirit of his *works*.

Hence Dr. Waagen, in this Essay, begins by a sketch of the life of Rubens, and the circumstances in which he was called upon to think and act, as

illustrative of his character; then he proceeds to consider his character as explanatory of his style of art; and, lastly, his pictures classed under different heads—scriptural, historical, and poetical subjects; tableaux de genre; animal painting; landscapes; portraits; as all illustrating in their various styles the principal characteristics of the man's individual mind.

With regard to Rubens there may exist a difference of *taste*, but there cannot, I conceive, be two *opinions*. The degree of pleasure we take in his works may depend more or less on our sympathy with and comprehension of the man, as a *man*: but assuredly every cultivated judgment, formed on just principles of art, must, consistently with such principles, pronounce Rubens one of the greatest painters in the world. We could entertain no very exalted idea of the taste of one who could prefer Rubens to Raffaëlle, but we should feel inclined to compassionate those who could not understand and appreciate Rubens. Pleasure, and pleasure of a most vivid kind, is necessarily shut out from such a mind.

To venture to judge Rubens, we ought to have seen

many of his pictures. His defects may be acknowledged once for all ; they are, in all senses gross, open, palpable. His florid colour, dazzling and garish in its indiscriminate excess ; his exaggerated, redundant forms ; his coarse allegories ; his historical improprieties ; his vulgar and prosaic versions of the loftiest and most delicate creations of poetry ;—let all these be granted ; but this man painted that sublime *History*, almost faultless in conception and in costume, the “ Decius” in the Lichtenstein Gallery.\* This man, who has been *called* unpoetical, and who was a born poet, if ever there was one,—conceived that magnificent epic, the Battle of the Amazons ; that divine lyric, the Virgin Mary, trampling down Sin and the Dragon, in the Munich Gallery—which might be styled a Pindaric Ode in honour of the Virgin, only painted instead of sung ; and those tenderest moral poems, the St. Theresa pleading for the Souls in Purgatory ;† and the little sketch of “ War,” in the Lichtenstein Gallery, where a woman sits desolate on the black wide heath, with dead bodies and implements of war heaped

\* See p. 64 of this Essay.

† For a description of this picture, see “ Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad,” vol. i. p. 253, 3rd edition.

in shadowy masses around her ; while, just seen against the lurid streak of light left by the setting sun, the battle rages in the far distance. In both these pictures, the moral and the sentiment are so exquisitely pure and true, and conveyed to the mind and to the heart with such comprehensive and immediate effect, that they might be compared to some of the sonnets of Filicaja. Look but at the thirteen hundred pictures, all the product of his own vehement and abounding fancy ; in great part the work of his own right hand. In these multifarious creations, embracing almost every aspect of life and nature, what amazing versatility of power as displayed in the conception of his subjects,—what fertility of invention in their various treatment ! What ardent, breathing, blooming life,—what pomp and potency of colour and light, have been poured forth on his canvass ! If he painted heavy forms, has he not given them souls ?—and animated them with all his own exuberance of vitality and volition ? Whatever his personages enact, they do with all the earnestness of the soul which conceived, and all the energy of the hand which formed them. Dr. Waagen dwells on the *dramatic* power of Rubens as the first and grand characteristic of his genius ; and who ever excelled him in

telling a story? in connecting, by sympathetic action or passion, his most complicate groups, and with them, in spirit, the fascinated spectator? And though thus dramatic in the strongest sense, yet he is so without approaching the verge of what we call *theatrical*. With all his flaunting luxuriance of colour, and occasional exaggeration in form, we cannot apply that word to him. Le Brun is theatrical: Rubens never. His sins are those of excess of power and daring; but he is ever the reverse of the flimsy, the artificial, or the superficial. His gay magnificence and sumptuous fancy are always accompanied by a certain impress and assurance of power and grandeur, which often reaches the sublime, even where it stops short of the ideal.

Rubens is the most popular, because the most intelligible, of painters. Goethe has laid down the axiom, that "every work of art, to be *consummate* in its way, must leave something for the intellect to divine." If this be true, as I think it is, Rubens must be pronounced so far deficient, that in his works there is no hidden significance of sentiment or beauty beyond what is at once apparent to the eye. His pictures are the perfection of the graphic, but not of the suggestive in art.

Had not Dr. Waagen confined himself within the compass of an essay, he might have carried out his views of causes and results much farther. For instance, it were a curious speculation to consider how far the genius of Rubens might have been modified by a longer stay in Italy: how far his Flemish temperament might have been sublimated in the perpetual presence of Italian beauty;—the pale, passionate, acute, and melancholy beauty of the south? That he brought something of this finer spirit in conception and style from Italy, and became more and more removed from it every succeeding year of his life, is apparent on a comparison of his earlier with his later pictures. Distinct as Rubens and Titian appear in their works, they seem to me to have been kindred minds, the very contrast which they exhibit as artists arising, in a manner, out of certain organic affinities in the nature of the two men: they saw with the same eyes, only that which they *saw* was different—as different as Flanders and Venice. “Both were painters of flesh and blood; by nature poets, by conformation colourists, by temperament and education magnificent spirits, scholars and gentlemen, lovers of pleasure and of fame.” The difference between the *glow* of Rubens and the *glow* of

Titian is the difference between the bright northern and the fervid southern climate ; between the dewy, roseate, all-involving light of morning, and the soft, shadowy, mellow splendours of evening. Let us endeavour to contrast in our fancy, or rather our memory, certain of their pictures : for instance, The Helena Formann of Rubens, with Titian's La Manto in the Pitti Palace ; the Man with the Hawk of Rubens, and Titian's Falconer ; the Chapeau de Paille, and the Flora of the Florentine Gallery ; can anything in art or creation be more opposed ? and yet, in all alike, is it not the intense feeling of life and individual nature which charms and fixes us ? But the characteristic in which Rubens did indeed surpass Titian and every other painter in the world, except Raffaele and Albert Durer, was fertility of ideas. They seem to have gushed forth on his canvass like a torrent, overpowering his judgment, confused by their own superabundance. It is only by understanding this *superflu d'âme et de vie*, that we can account for certain anomalies in his works. That he was a learned classical scholar, yet committed the wildest anachronisms in manners and costume ; that he was familiar with the grace and grandeur of the antique, and could feel and understand both, yet



was guilty of the strangest solecisms in character and form—arose not from incapacity or from ignorance, but from the influence of a foregone period in art, from which he could not shake himself wholly free, Titan as he was; and yet more from certain strong elements of his physical nature, beyond the mastery of his intellect, strong as *that* was. Rubens understood himself, knew what it lay in him to do, and did it confidently, joyously, spontaneously: and therefore it is that with all his faults he remains ever great, original, and consistent with himself.

Rubens, as a painter, has been compared to Dryden as a poet: but in the structure of his mind as a man, and in the manifestations of his genius as an artist, might he not be compared more justly to Sir Walter Scott? for so he seems to have stood in his generation, so compassed round with worship and popularity, and abundance of wealth, fame, and friends, without rivals or competitors; so rich in all endowments of body and mind that could “give the world assurance of a man;” “a man without fantasticalities or affectations;” with the same robust and healthy tone of mind, the same goodness of heart, and warm domestic affections, the same practical worldly sense, the same pas-

tion for all the paraphernalia of power, royalty, chivalry ; the same bravery of self-confidence and self-complacency ; the same love of animals, too, and comprehension of their instincts and habits. In their works the same quick perception of all the various aspects of nature, all the changes of many-coloured life, with the same fidelity and veracity, the same wondrous readiness of hand and careless freedom of touch in depicting them ; the same fertility of invention and facility of execution ; and the same power of hurrying along, in accordance with the bent of their own individuality, the popular taste, while they seemed to be adapting themselves to it. But such parallels are, perhaps, too fanciful and arbitrary for sober criticism, and certainly very far from the rational and yet profound principles of art which distinguish the following Essay. It is a manual for the admirers of Rubens, and will, I hope, enable the amateur better to understand the character and works of a man who, considered as an individual, seems to have been most singularly graced by nature and by fortune ; while, considered as an artist, we can but subscribe to the judgment of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and cannot better conclude than in his own emphatic words : “ Those

who do not see the extraordinary merit of this great painter, either have a narrow conception of the variety of art, or are led away by the affectation of admiring nothing but what comes from the Italian school."

A. J.

*Dover, January 28, 1840.*



# LIST

OF THE

## PICTURES PAINTED BY RUBENS,

WHICH ARE NOTICED IN THE COURSE OF THE FOLLOWING  
ESSAY.

THE FIGURES REFER TO THE PAGES.

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*Additional Note.*—The picture known as "Pythagoras," and described at page 92, is at present in the possession of Dr. Stokoe, to whom it was presented by Joseph Buonaparte, the Ex-king of Spain.

## ERRATA.

Page 58, line 4, *for* Anadoyome *read* Anadyomene.

75, — 14, *for* mourning *read* morning.

85, second line from the bottom, *insert a period after* Antwerp.

94, line 18, *instead of* morals *read* morale.

111, — 9, *instead of* But that he did, not *read* but that he did not,



# PETER PAUL RUBENS;

## HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.

---

ONE of the most important and gratifying results of the philosophic spirit, and of the profound historical researches of the present age, unquestionably consists in a more enlarged and just appreciation of the particular characteristics of whole periods of time, of whole nations, as well as of individual personages; and likewise in the conviction which results therefrom, that the only true standard by which to judge of any historical phenomenon is to be found in the thorough understanding of all its distinguishing peculiarities.

The false judgments produced by the absence of this higher and more comprehensive spirit in criticism and

in literature, are sufficiently numerous as regards general history; but nowhere more conspicuous than in the History of Modern Art. It has been too much the custom to judge of a work of art as the chance product of certain general circumstances, and to invest it with a high or low value, according as these were more or less predominant, instead of considering it as the most faithful and striking expression of the individual mind of the artist. Latterly, however, attempts have been made, and with the best success, to correct the popular opinions of different epochs in the history of art, as well as of the various schools and masters, by a deeper examination of the characteristic peculiarities of each. To judge Rubens and his works in this better spirit, will be the aim of the following pages; and I have selected this painter, not only as one of the most distinguished and important in the history of modern art; but more particularly because it has been his fate either to have been extravagantly extolled, or depreciated in an unjust and one-sided manner, instead of being judged in that large and impartial spirit which a mind and talents like his ought to command.

Rubens belongs to that small number of gifted in-

dividuals on whom outward circumstances have smiled from early youth ; to whom has been granted the careful and uninterrupted developement of all their native powers. His father,\* a jurist and man of singular learning, was appointed, in May 1562, a magistrate† of Antwerp. But the disturbances in the Netherlands, particularly the rage for destroying pictures, which broke out in the month of August 1566, and the attendant disorders which for some time seemed to threaten life and property, caused him to feel so insecure in Antwerp, that he followed the example of many of the most respectable Catholic families of the Netherlands, and sought refuge in Cologne. In this city, in the year 1574, his eldest son was born, and received the name of Philip. He was subsequently distinguished for his classical acquirements, but died as early as 1611. On the 29th of June 1577, being the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the wife of John Rubens presented him with a second son, who, in honour of the saints, received

\* The family of Rubens came originally from Styria, in Upper Austria. Bartholomew Rubens, the grandfather of the painter, visited Brussels in the suite of the Emperor Charles V. about the year 1520, and, having married a Flemish lady of noble birth, afterwards settled at Antwerp. See the French Life of Rubens.—A. J.

† In German. Schöffen ; in French, Echevain.

their names at his baptism. The family of Rubens remained in Cologne until the year 1587, at which period John Rubens died. After this event, as the aspect of affairs in Antwerp had now become more settled, owing to the conquest of the city by the Duke of Parma, and also much more favourable to the Catholics, the widow decided on returning there with her two sons. By the time our Peter Paul Rubens had reached his sixteenth year, she found an opportunity of placing him as page in the household of the widowed Countess of Lalaing; but his taste for higher and nobler occupations had been already called forth by a careful education; and the irregular course of life he was obliged to lead in this situation was so little suited to his disposition, that in a short time he returned again to his mother. The quickness of parts, the capacity for acquiring knowledge of every kind, but more particularly languages, which young Rubens displayed, induced his mother and guardians to destine him for the profession of his father; yet, as he showed a remarkable inclination for drawing, an hour or two were occasionally devoted to instruction in this art, under a skilful master. In a short time, however, his love for this pursuit became so strong, that he earnestly entreated his mother to be allowed to devote himself

entirely to painting as a profession. This request she and the guardians were at length induced to gratify, not only in consideration of the singular talent which he displayed, but also because the greater part of the family fortune had been lost in the wars. Rubens was then placed as a regular pupil under Tobias Verhaegt, a skilful landscape painter; but shortly after he was consigned to the tuition of the historical painter, Adam Van Oort, distinguished for his fine colouring; but whose dissolute life, churlish manners, and vulgar treatment of his pupils, so much disgusted young Rubens, that he soon quitted him and had recourse to Otto Van Veen, usually named Otto Venius, at that time court painter to the Infanta Isabella, and her husband, the Archduke Albert, and highly esteemed in the Netherlands. Rubens now found all that he most desired; not only was he charmed by the gentle and amiable character and the polished manners of his master, but his thirst for instruction in his art was fully gratified by the extensive and scientific knowledge, in all the details of painting, which Otto Venius possessed and freely communicated to his pupil; and, as the extraordinary talents of Rubens were allied to remarkable diligence and perseverance, we can easily understand

that he profited greatly by the opportunities of instruction he now enjoyed: his progress was in fact so rapid, that, in the year 1600, Venius advised him to go to Italy, there to finish his education as a painter. He was then in his twenty-third year.

It is not easy to find another instance of an artist undertaking this journey so well prepared for it in every respect as was the case with Rubens;—a journey which has too often proved the rock on which the hopes of many young artists of Germany and the Netherlands both in former times and in our own day have been miserably wrecked. Owing to the writings of such men as Justus Lipsius and others, the study of classical antiquities was at that time general in the Low Countries, and Rubens, besides being well grounded in this branch of knowledge, was sufficiently master of the Latin language to be able to speak and write it with fluency. In accordance with his general cultivation of mind, was that rare combination of various capabilities as an artist, which he had acquired through the aid of his different instructors. The feeling for nature in all her various forms, and especially under that general aspect which we call landscape, had been early and for ever awakened by Verhaegt: he had also acquired the

admirable style of colouring of Adam Van Oort; and, lastly, he had to thank Otto Venius for being well grounded in anatomy and perspective, and particularly in the principles of the *chiaro oscuro*, as well as for many admirable hints with regard to composition in general. Previous to the commencement of his Italian journey, Rubens had already executed several valuable pictures. Amongst others, Descamps mentions the Adoration of the Three Kings and a Holy Trinity: also a Christ dead in the arms of God the Father, surrounded with angels, and the instruments of the Passion;\* which last picture was to be seen, as an altar-piece, under the gallery in the church of the Carmelites in Antwerp so late as the year 1769.†

Rubens began his journey to Italy on the 9th of May 1600, having previously recommended himself to the protection of the Infanta Isabella and the Archduke Albert, to whom, through Otto Venius, he was already most favourably known as an artist. He proceeded first to Venice,‡ and thence in a short

\* Descamps *la vie des Peintres*, &c., tom. i. p. 323.

† Descamp's *Travels*, translated into German by Volkmann, p. 189. This picture is engraved by S. a Bolswert.

‡ Houbraken says he passed through France, which, however, does not seem to me probable.

time to Mantua, where he presented his letters of recommendation from the Archduke to Duke Vincenzo I. of the house of Gonzaga. This prince, celebrated for his taste in literature and patronage of the fine arts, soon became aware of the uncommon genius of the youthful painter, and offered to take him into his service as gentleman of the chamber. To this proposal Rubens readily acceded : it afforded him the wished-for opportunity of studying at his leisure the immense collection of treasures of art belonging to the house of Gonzaga, then existing entire in Mantua, though the pictures subsequently formed the principal part of the collection of Charles I. of England. The spirited and beautiful compositions of Giulio Romano, in the Palazzo del T., particularly the Marriage of Psyche, and the Fall of the Giants, seem to have had an extraordinary effect on the mind of our young artist: to none of the great Italian masters did he feel himself so nearly allied by sympathy of taste in composition as to Giulio Romano ; and the influence which the works of this great painter exercised over him at this time, is to be traced in his own finest works. The Triumphal Procession of Caesar, by Andrea Mantegna, now at Hampton Court, but at that time in the Mantuan Gallery, must also have had some influence upon him,



as is proved by the free copy which he made of one of the compartments: this copy is in the possession of Samuel Rogers, esq.\*

Towards the end of the year 1601, Rubens went to Rome, where, however, he remained but a short time. Soon after his return to Mantua, profiting by the permission of the Duke, he proceeded to Venice, and, while in this city, he employed his time in studying

\* Dr. Waagen's more detailed account of this picture is too characteristic of the painter to be omitted. "Rubens, during his residence at Mantua, was so pleased with the Triumph of Julius Cæsar, by Mantegna, that he made a free copy of one of the nine pictures. His love for the fantastic and pompous led him to choose that with the elephants carrying the Candelabra; but his ardent imagination, ever directed to the dramatic, could not be contented with this: instead of a harmless sheep, which, in Mantegna, is walking by the side of the foremost elephant. Rubens has introduced a lion and a lioness, which growl angrily at the elephant. The latter, on his part, is not idle, but, looking furiously round, is on the point of striking the lion a blow with his trunk. The severe pattern which he had before him in Mantegna has moderated Rubens in his taste for very full forms, so that they are here more noble and slender than is usual with him. The colouring, as in all his earlier pictures, is more subdued than in the later, and yet powerful. Rubens himself seems to have set a high value on this study; for it was among his effects at his death. During the revolution Mr. Champenowne bought it from the Balbi palace at Genoa."—*Art and Artists in England*, vol. ii.—A. J.

with great care the works of Titian and Paul Veronese, two masters who, of all others, seem to have most assisted him in the cultivation of his strong faculty of colour. Three pictures which he executed for the church of the Jesuits in Mantua, exhibit the result of these studies.

After these new proofs of talent, the Duke, who had long wished to possess copies of some of the most valuable pictures in Rome, thought he could employ no fitter person for this object than Rubens. While engaged in the task, he found time, during his residence at Rome, to execute a commission which he had received from the Archduke Albert to paint three pictures for the church of Santa Croce di Gerusalemme, connected with which church the Archduke had formerly borne the cardinal's hat.\* These pictures, representing the Crowning with thorns, the Crucifixion, and the Finding of the Cross, were very remarkable as specimens of his style of painting at that period. They were brought to England in the year 1811, and sold by auction the following year. The Crucifixion, afterwards sold by Mr. Woodburn to Count Woronzow, and sent to St. Petersburg, was unhappily lost at sea.

\* Before his marriage with the Infanta, he was a cardinal.

It was probably on his return from Rome that Rubens spent some time in Florence, in order to study the works of art in that city: he received a distinguished welcome from the Grand Duke Ferdinand I. It appears, however, that he did not paint much for him at this period, as his most celebrated pictures in the Pitti Palace were executed at a later date.

While Rubens was in the service of Duke Vincenzo, he appears to have gained his entire confidence and good will, and was esteemed by the Duke, not only as a distinguished artist, but as a man of cultivated mind\* and amiable manners: and, in truth, if we may trust to the unanimous testimony of all contemporary writers, Rubens seems to have belonged to that rare class of gifted natures who, from personal as well as mental qualities, are born to exercise a peculiar charm on all around them. To a handsome and well-proportioned frame was united a certain dignity of demeanour. His

\* It is said that the Duke, once visiting Rubens unexpectedly when he was at work on a picture representing the combat between Æneas and Turnus, recited the well-known lines from Virgil:—"Ille etiam patriis agmen ciet Ocnus ab oris," etc. The Duke was not a little surprised, when the artist replied in elegant Latin to the verses which he had smilingly addressed to him.

regular features were set off to advantage by a fine complexion, and glossy brown hair; and his eyes, beaming with a softened fire, gave to his whole countenance a character at once gentle, animated, and noble. To these advantages were added a most captivating manner and an agreeable voice; ready powers of conversation; an active, clear intellect, with a turn for humour, and an habitual self-command. Considering these advantages, it is not surprising that the Duke should have fixed his eyes on Rubens as the fittest person to be the bearer of certain presents he wished to send to the King of Spain. He therefore, in 1605, recalled our artist from Rome and commissioned him to convey to Philip III. a splendid state carriage, and six horses of uncommon beauty.

At the court of Madrid, Rubens met with the most gracious reception, not only in quality of the duke's ambassador, but in that of an accomplished artist. He was employed to paint the portraits of the king, and several of the most distinguished nobles, for which he received princely remuneration in presents and applause.

His mission fulfilled, he once more returned to

Mantua, and once more obtained leave from the Duke Vincenzo to visit Rome, where he had been commissioned to paint an altar-piece for the church of Santa Maria, in Vallicella. In the centre he represented the Virgin Mary, with the infant Jesus in glory, surrounded by adoring angels. In the side compartments he introduced several saints, particularly Pope Gregory and St. Maurice; the last are said to be painted in a grand style, resembling that of Paul Veronese. During this residence in Rome, he was joined by his brother Philip, in whose company he studied the antiquities of the place with the utmost diligence and zeal. We find the result of these researches, in a work published by Philip Rubens, in 1608, in the literary contents of which Peter took no inconsiderable part, besides giving the sketches for six copperplate illustrations.\*

About the commencement of the year 1607, Rubens quitted Rome, proceeding first to Milan, and afterwards to Genoa; where he received so many orders for pictures, and passed his time so agreeably, that he

\* In the *Electis*, page 21, an elegy to our artist, by his brother Philip, begins thus: *Discupio enim aliquod hic extare amoris et grati in ipsum. (P. P. Rubenium,) animi monumentum, qui tum artificis manu, tum acri certoque judicio, non parum in Electis me juvit.*

remained longer there than in any other part of Italy. Amongst the numerous works which he painted while at Genoa, for churches and private persons, two destined for the church of the Jesuits, (the Circumcision, and St. Ignatius healing a man possessed of a devil,) may be classed with the best of his Italian productions.

As an occupation of secondary importance, he took sketches of the most interesting palaces and churches in Genoa, which were afterwards published in a work of engravings.\* The quaint, fantastic, and somewhat barbarian magnificence of the greater part of the palaces in Genoa seems to have been in accordance with his taste, and many of his later pictures show the effect which these architectural studies had on his mind.

His sojourn in Genoa was most painfully interrupted, in the autumn of 1608, by the news that his mother was dangerously ill. He at once decided on his immediate return to Antwerp, after a residence of not less than eight years in Italy ; but he did not reach

\* *Palazzi di Genova*, raccolti e designati da P. P. Rubens. Antwerp, 1622, with 139 copperplates, large folio. In the year 1652, a second volume of this work appeared.

his home in time to see his mother again ; she had died on the 14th of November previous.\* The grief which he felt at this loss was so great that he passed four months in the abbey of St. Michael, where his mother was buried, in the deepest seclusion, during which time nothing but his pencil and a few chosen books had power to afford him any consolation. At length his habits of Italian life, and his sentiments of gratitude and friendship for the Duke Vincenzo, to whom he felt doubly bound by the very flattering offers he had lately received from him, inspired the determination to return to Mantua. But when he presented himself before the Archduke and the Infanta at Brussels, they pressed him so generously and so earnestly to remain in the Netherlands, and attach himself to their court, placing before him, at the same time, the prospect of a brilliant career in his own country, that he at once determined on sacrificing his previous engagements and plans, and acceded to their wishes ; he only entreated permission to choose Antwerp as his place of residence, fearing lest the distractions of a court might prevent him from reaching that high eminence

\* The mother of Rubens, to whom he was so much indebted in the course of his education, was Maria Pypelink, of a well-known family of Antwerp.—A. J.

as an artist, which with labour and diligence he hoped to attain. Having thus determined to settle himself in his native land, Rubens began to look about for a wife, as the best means of ensuring his happiness : and he soon found what he sought, in Elizabeth Brant, the daughter of a magistrate of Antwerp, to whom he was united in the month of November 1609. His next object was to possess a house, which, in architectural beauty and internal arrangements, should be a fitting abode for an artist ; and, as far as possible, indemnify him for the sacrifice he had made in not returning to Italy. In pursuance of this idea, he decided upon building a house in the Italian style,\* after designs of his own ; the front was painted in fresco with his own hands, and the rooms were decorated with various works of art ; between the court and a large garden, in which were cultivated the rarest flowers and trees, he caused a rotunda to be constructed, lighted from a cupola above, similar to the Pantheon in Rome.† Here the most valuable statues, busts, paintings, vases of agate, gems, cameos, and an admi-

\* According to Houbraken, the building of this house cost him 60,000 florins.

† Harrewyns made two copperplate engravings of the house and garden in 1684.



nable collection of coins, which he had brought from Italy, were arranged in a tasteful manner. During his life he continued to add to this collection by every means in his power.

Being thus established according to his taste, he apportioned his time in the following manner: He was in the habit of rising very early; in summer at four o'clock, and immediately afterwards he heard mass. He then went to work, and, while painting, he habitually employed a person to read to him from one of the classical authors, (his favourites being Livy, Plutarch, Cicero, Seneca,) or from some eminent poet. This was the time when he generally received his visitors, with whom he entered willingly into conversation on a variety of topics, in the most animated and agreeable manner. An hour before dinner was always devoted to recreation, which consisted either in allowing his thoughts to dwell as they listed on subjects connected with science or politics, which latter interested him deeply; or in contemplating his treasures of art. From anxiety not to impair the brilliant play of his fancy, he indulged but sparingly in the pleasures of the table, and drank but little wine.\* After working

\* Fuseli is reproached with having taken quite an opposite method to

again till the evening, he usually, if not prevented by business, mounted a spirited Andalusian horse, and rode for an hour or two. This was his favourite exercise; he was extremely fond of horses, and his stables generally contained some of remarkable beauty. On his return home it was his custom to receive a few friends, principally men of learning, or artists, with whom he shared his frugal meal, (he was the declared enemy of all excess,) and passed the evening in instructive and cheerful conversation. This active and regular mode of life could alone have enabled Rubens to satisfy all the demands which were made upon him as an artist, and the astonishing number of works he completed, the genuineness of which is beyond all doubt, can only be accounted for through this union of extraordinary diligence, with the acknowledged fertility of his productive powers.

One of the first pictures which Rubens painted after his return from Italy, was an altar-piece for the private chapel of the Archduke Albert, representing a holy

stimulate the vivacity of *his* fancy; yet, when we look upon the works of the two painters, do not the creations of Fuseli seem to spring from the excitement of penance and fasting, and those of Rubens from the jovial spirit of high-fed self-indulgence?—A. J.

family. The Virgin is holding, with both hands, the infant Jesus, who is standing on a pedestal, whilst St. John, who is sitting on the lap of Elizabeth, is adoring him. Joseph, looking on with an expression of sympathy, is standing behind the Virgin. Of all the compositions of this class painted by Rubens I have no hesitation in according the palm to this, for with the exception of the infant Christ, which has the air of a portrait, and is not successfully executed, the characters are dignified and noble, the forms fine, the colouring of rare clearness and depth, without exaggeration, the finishing most happy and full of feeling.\* This picture was so much admired, that the members of the fraternity of St. Ildefonso, at the head of which was the Archduke Albert, commanded an altar-piece to be painted by Rubens, for the chapel of the order of St. James, on the Caudenberg, near Brussels: this picture, which is at present in the imperial gallery at Vienna,

\* This masterpiece was afterwards removed to Vienna, with the collection of the Archduke Leopold, and was an ornament of the imperial gallery until it was presented by the Emperor Joseph II. to the well-known Burtin, in Brussels. After passing through several hands, it at last came into the possession of Mr. Bourhault, of Paris, with whose collection it came over to England.

represents the Virgin Mary enthroned, and putting the cloak of the order on the shoulders of St. Ildefonso: she is surrounded by four female saints. On the interior of the wings are the portraits of the Archduke Albert and Isabella, with their patron saints. This work, one of the most admirable ever painted by Rubens, displays in a remarkable degree the qualities praised in the former one.

Highly valuable as a specimen of the peculiar manner in which Rubens treated portraits at this period of his life, is the celebrated picture in the Munich gallery, representing himself and his first wife, which, to judge by the youthful looks of both, could not have been painted very long after their marriage.\* The air of sober affection in the couple, who are seated in an arbour of honeysuckles, the expression of calm intellect and energy in the head of Rubens, and of cheerful, good-humoured contentment in that of his wife, lend a particular attraction to this picture, and speak direct to the heart: in this respect it differs as much from the peculiar style of his later works, as it does in the stronger marked outlines, the less glowing colouring, and the careful execution of the well-adjusted and

\* Engraved in the stippled manner, by Hess.

elegant attire of the figures, as well as of the foliage and herbage in the foreground.\* It was only by degrees that Rubens adopted a more free, brilliant, fantastic, but at the same time somewhat sketchy style; and even in his later pictures, traces of this finer, softer, and more elevated manner are observable. In one of his most celebrated works, the altar-piece in the cathedral of Antwerp, which was painted before the year 1620, both his styles, the earlier and the later, are found remarkably combined. In the centre piece, the Descent from the Cross, the boldness of the composition, the

\* This charming picture merits all the praise bestowed on it by Dr. Waagen; such is the expression of quiet happiness, the "sober certainty of waking bliss," shed over the figures, that it is scarce possible to contemplate it without a smile of complacency, and, at the same time, an emotion of sympathy and congratulation. It is always interesting to note the manner in which different characters, supposing an equal degree of cultivation and judgment, are struck by the same pictures; I therefore subjoin the critique of Sir Joshua Reynolds in his notes on the Dusseldorf Gallery. "Rubens and his wife, when he was a young man, for his portrait here appears not above two or three-and-twenty: his wife is very handsome, and has an agreeable countenance. She is by much the best part of the picture, which is rather in a hard manner. The linen is gray; he was at this period afraid of white." Rubens must have passed his thirty-second year when this portrait was painted, in 1609; but he certainly looks much younger.—A. J.

energy in the characters, the striking attitudes, and the effect of the grouping, together with the glowing, vigorous colouring, belong to his later style; whereas a few of the heads, particularly that of the Virgin, display the careful execution of his earlier period. The interior of the wings, on which are painted the Visitation, and the Presentation in the Temple, exhibit, on the other hand, a greater resemblance to the conjugal picture already alluded to, owing to a certain repose in the action, a more elevated expression of delicacy and feeling in the characters, and a less glowing, though still admirable colouring.\*

\* There have been many engravings made of the centre piece; the best of the older ones, by Luc Vostermann—of the later ones, by Claessens. The Visitation is engraved by F. de Jode; the Presentation in the Temple by P. Pontius.

The origin of this famous picture, as related in various lives of Rubens, ought not to be omitted. The painter, in preparing the foundations of his new house, had unknowingly trespassed on a piece of ground belonging to the company of arquebussiers at Antwerp. A lawsuit was threatened, and Rubens, with all the vivacity of his nature, prepared measures of resistance; but when his friend Rockox, one of the greatest lawyers of the city, had proved to him that the right lay not with him, he immediately drew back, and offered to paint a picture by way of compensation. The offer was accepted, and the company of arquebussiers required a representation of their patron, St. Christopher, to be

Such works as the Descent from the Cross had raised the painter's reputation to the highest pitch, so that when the widowed Queen of France, (Marie de Medicis,) wished to adorn the Luxemburg palace with a series of pictures, representing the principal events of her life, Leo von Viego, who at that time was the ambassador from the Netherlands to the court of Paris, found no difficulty in inducing the queen to employ Rubens in preference to all other painters of the time.

Rubens therefore made a journey to Paris in the year 1620, where he was received in the most gracious manner; and having come to an understanding with

placed in his chapel in the cathedral. Rubens, in that munificent and magnificent spirit which always distinguished the man, presented to his adversaries, not merely the single figure of the great saint, but an elaborate and significant illustration of his name, (*the Christ-bearing.*) Thus, in the centre, the disciples are lifting Christ from the cross and sustaining him in their arms; on the wings we have the Visitation; St. Simeon with Christ in his arms, St. Christopher with Christ on his shoulders, and the old hermit bearing the light. The arquebussiers, we are told, were disappointed at first, not to have their saint represented in the usual manner, and Rubens was obliged to enter into an explanation of his work; after which they condescended to be satisfied. They had received, though perhaps they knew it not, in exchange for a plot of earth a few feet square, a miracle of art, of which it would now be difficult to compute the value either in money or land.—A. J.

the queen relative to the subjects for twenty-one compositions, he obtained permission, for the sake of expediting their completion, to have them painted in his own *atelier* at Antwerp. In executing the commissions which now poured in upon him, he derived the greatest advantage from the numerous pupils he had been induced to receive since his return from Italy. These young men, under his careful instruction, had become superior artists, and with their assistance he was enabled to have the pictures placed in a gallery of the Luxemburg palace, erected for the purpose, so early as the month of March, 1625. Besides the sketches for these pictures,\* he did not execute with his own hand more than the principal parts in the more important amongst them. He probably confined himself merely to painting the portraits, which for the greater part he took from the life, when at Paris. If these portions by the hand of Rubens belong to the most admirable of his performances, still the value of the rest naturally varies according to the greater or less talent of the pupils who painted them. To these twenty-one, were added the portrait of Mary de Medicis, as *Bellona*, and those of

\* They are now in the Gallery at Munich.—A. J.



her parents, the Grand Duke Francis of Tuscany, and his wife, the last of which, it is probable, were merely touched here and there by Rubens. In the composition of the historical scenes, and in the manner in which he has treated the allegorical and historical personages, he may justly be reproached with that depravation of taste, so disagreeably apparent in the works of many of the Flemish masters of the sixteenth century. Who that is endued with a fine and high feeling for art, can derive pleasure from contemplating a whole bevy of Olympian divinities, with their appendages, represented according to the notions of the ancients, consequently half-naked, sometimes as swimming the ocean, or hovering in the air, and these brought into immediate juxta-position with kings and queens and other personages of high rank, for the most part faithful portraits, and all in the formal court costume of those times? The marriage scene, in which a bishop is represented as performing the ceremony before an altar, in the presence of Christ, whilst the heathen god Hymen is bearing the train of the princess, has long struck even the most unqualified admirers of Rubens as unseemly. However, the queen and her court testified their high approbation when the work was

completed.\* It was during this last residence at Paris that Rubens became acquainted with the Duke of Buckingham, that unworthy favourite of Charles I., whose portrait he painted. This acquaintance led to a correspondence, which resulted in the purchase by the Duke of Buckingham of the whole admirable collection of statues, paintings, and other works of art, in the possession of Rubens, for the sum of 100,000 florins, and which, without doubt, formed the most important part of the duke's valuable collection.† It was the intention of Queen Mary to decorate another gallery in the Luxemburg palace with a series of paintings by the hand of Rubens, taken from the history of Henri Quatre; and Rubens did, in fact, paint the victory of Henry IV. at Ivry, and his subsequent triumph, which are now in the grand-ducal collection at Florence; but the numerous demands on his time and exertions during the following years, and at a later date the unhappy fate of the queen, prevented the completion of this undertaking, to the great loss of all lovers of art.

\* This whole series is now in the Gallery of the Louvre.

† "The Duke," says Walpole, "was bent on the purchase, and gave ten thousand pounds for what had not cost above a thousand."—A. J.

On the 29th September, 1626, Rubens had the misfortune to lose his wife; his grief at this severe domestic affliction was very great, and to divert his mind he undertook a journey to Holland. There he visited the most distinguished painters, as Cornelius Poelenberg, Gerard Honthorst, and others, to whose works he accorded due praise, and purchased one or more pictures from each of them. In the *atelier* of Honthorst he made the acquaintance of Joachim Sandrart, then in his twenty-first year. At the instigation of his master, (who was himself prevented by illness,) he accompanied our artist, for a fortnight, on a tour to the different towns of Holland. Sandrart mentions this journey in his "German Academy," in the following manner: "I could find much to relate of this journey, and of his worthy conduct, but will thus shortly include all,—that like as he is distinguished in art, so have I found him perfect in all other virtues, and everywhere I have seen him looked up to with admiration by persons of high and of low degree."

We are now arrived at the period when Rubens distinguished himself in quite another field than that of the fine arts—that of diplomacy. The melancholy condition of his native land, continually a prey to war, had

affected him so deeply, that he made it his aim to gain every possible information on political subjects, and had carefully considered the aspect of affairs in the Netherlands, as well as in the other most influential states of Europe: he had accordingly seized every opportunity of increasing his stock of political knowledge, and had acquired, besides, a singular ease and tact in his intercourse with society: he was also master of several living languages, thanks to his having been well grounded in Latin in his youth. These peculiar advantages had not escaped the penetration of the Archduke Albert, who esteemed Rubens so highly that he had stood godfather to his eldest son. It is said, moreover, that shortly before his death, in 1621, he enjoined his wife to trust to the advice of Rubens in matters of difficulty, as to that of an upright, wise, and clear-headed man. From this time Rubens received many marks of distinguished favour at the hands of the Infanta; on her return from the siege of Breda, in June 1625, in company with the Marquis Spinola, she had even honoured him with a visit in his own house. The year preceding, when the commencement of hostilities between England and Spain

had made a truce with the United Provinces desirable, Rubens had been chosen by her to negotiate to this effect; but her project was entirely defeated by a court intrigue. When Charles I. was induced by Buckingham, in 1627, to declare war against France, it seemed probable to the Infanta that England might now be disposed to enter into a treaty of peace with Spain; she therefore employed Rubens to correspond on the subject with Gerbier, the agent of Charles I. at the Hague,—and at that time in the service of the English monarch as painter and architect. In pursuance of this object Rubens himself made a journey to Holland, and in July, the same year, had a meeting with Gerbier, at Delft;\* but the dilatoriness and indecision of the court of Spain, and the unreasonable exactions of the Dutch, who were to be parties to the treaty, caused this negotiation to end without any favourable results.

The ruined state of the finances, and the growing discontent of the people, in the year 1627, induced the Infanta to send Rubens to Spain, in order to call the

\* For further particulars, see the letter from Gerbier to the English minister, Lord Holland, dated 6th August, 1627, in Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. ii.

attention of the king more forcibly to this state of things. In the month of September he reached Madrid, and executed the delicate commission entrusted to him with so much discretion and candour, that he soon gained the confidence of Philip IV. and of the Duke d'Olivarez. The following year the Marquis Spinola was recalled to Spain; and the Infanta, finding herself now deprived of the only man who was capable of successfully opposing the Dutch, longed more eagerly than ever for a peace with England, to which she hoped Charles I. would at length accede, one impediment at least having been removed by the murder of the Duke of Buckingham, on the 23rd of August in the same year. She therefore commanded Rubens to do all in his power to gain over the King of Spain to her views: but skilful as he was, and practised in all the arts of persuasion, he at this time failed, owing to the well-known indecision of the Spanish court. He had executed several admirable pictures during his protracted residence in Madrid, and now returned to Brussels, after having been raised by the king to the dignity of secretary to the Privy Council, and loaded with gifts and recompenses.

He had not been long at home when the people

of the Netherlands, ground to the earth by heavy taxes, and embittered by the arrogant conduct of the Spanish troops, exhibited the most alarming signs of discontent. The King of Spain, fearing another insurrection, and in a state of great financial distress, owing to the capture of the *La Plata* fleet by the Dutch, at length wrote to the Infanta to send Rubens to England in order to negotiate a peace. Towards the end of 1629, Rubens, having received his instructions, departed for London. The choice of an ambassador could not have fallen on any one better calculated to suit the individual character of Charles I., who was a passionate lover of art, and easily captivated by men of cultivated intellect and refined manners. Rubens, therefore, in whom the most admirable and attractive qualities were united to the rarest genius as an artist, soon succeeded in winning the attention and regard of the king. Charles was the more readily gained over to this project of peace, as the war had been undertaken by Buckingham merely in a fit of caprice, and the resources of England were nearly exhausted through it, and the war with France. Nevertheless the negotiations with Cottingham proceeded so slowly, that Rubens found time to execute several

pictures; he began by painting an allegory representing the blessings of peace, and the horrors of war, which he presented to the king as a tangible recommendation of the pacific measures he had come to propose.\* He likewise painted a Saint

\* This admirable picture, after the breaking up of the collection of Charles I., came into the possession of the family Balbi, of Genoa. It was however, obtained by the Marquis of Stafford during the French revolution, and by him presented to the National Gallery.

On a reference to Buchanan's chronological history of the importation of pictures into England, it appears that in 1802 this celebrated picture was in the collection of one of the Doria family, and not included in the Balbi Gallery; it is described in a letter from Irvine, Buchanan's agent, as containing "almost everything in which Rubens excelled,—women, children, a man in armour, a satyr, a tiger, fruit, and furies: it is known in Genoa by the name of Rubens' family, and has always been a well-known and celebrated picture. It is in the collection of George Doria, &c." The picture was purchased of the Doria family for £1,100, and on its arrival in England its real subject and history was ascertained by a reference to the catalogue of King Charles's pictures, where it is called "A picture of Peace and Plenty, with many figures as big as life, by Rubens;" and in another part of the same catalogue it is entitled "An emblem of Peace and War, which Sir Peter Paul Rubens, when he was here in England, did paint, and presented it himself to the king, containing some nine figures." It was first offered to government, but declined by Mr. Pitt; subsequently it was purchased by the Marquis of Stafford for £3,000, and by him munificently presented to the National Gallery. Considering the associa-



George, engaged in combat with the dragon,\* an Assumption of the Virgin Mary, as well as the sketches for the nine pictures which were intended to represent, in an allegorical style, the illustrious deeds of James I., and were to decorate the ceiling of the throne saloon in Whitehall: the pictures themselves were finished at a later date in Antwerp.† In the mean time Rubens received numerous tokens of favour and reward from the king; as early as the month of

tions connected with it, it could be nowhere more fitly placed. It may be interesting to add, that the inimitable landscape in the National Gallery was brought to England from Genoa at the same time, and purchased by Lady Beaumont as a present for her husband. The biography of a famous picture, with all the vicissitudes, associations, and sentiments connected with it, would surely be a charming thing—well and truly recorded.—A. J.

\* This picture was purchased by Endymion Porter for Charles I. It was afterwards in the Orleans gallery, and at the great sale of the Orleans collection in England, in the year 1793, was bought by Mr. Morland for 1000*l*. He disposed of it to George IV. at a later period, and it is now in Windsor Castle.

† Rubens is said to have received for them 3000*l*: the figures are all of colossal proportion. These pictures could never have been classed with the first-rate performances of the artist, and have suffered much from repeated restorations. It must be allowed that James I. was far less calculated to inspire the imagination of a painter than Marie de Medicis.

February, 1630, he was knighted by him in White-hall, on which occasion the king is said to have presented him with his own sword: and when at length the preliminaries were brought so near to a conclusion, that in November the treaty of peace was to be signed at the court of Spain, Rubens, on taking leave, received a handsome service of plate, and the portrait of the king appended to a rich chain of gold, which last, in grateful remembrance, he ever after wore around his neck. While Rubens had been thus singularly successful in gaining the favour of the King of England, he had shown the greatest tact in keeping steadily in view the interests of the court of Spain. This is sufficiently proved by the fact, that by the articles of peace, which were most disadvantageous for England, Charles I. had completely sacrificed his unfortunate brother-in-law the Elector Palatine, and not less by the honourable reception which Rubens met with at the court of Madrid, whither he immediately proceeded, to give an account of his diplomatic labours.\* Philip IV.

\* The part which Rubens took in this negotiation for peace, has been wilfully misrepresented and exaggerated by many writers. The best historical authorities on this subject are to be found in Khevenhüller *Annales Ferdinandi*, tom. xi. p. 393 and 397, sub. 1629; and in Fiorillo, vol. iii. p. 10; likewise in the epitaph on Rubens, by Basan and de Piles.

lavished on him the most flattering expressions of satisfaction, accompanied by costly presents; and he was promised that the office of secretary to the Privy Council should, upon his decease, be continued to his eldest son. After having painted the portraits of the king and several of his courtiers, with some other pictures of value, besides taking the measurement for the works which he was commissioned to execute for the Palace Torre de la Parada,\* he returned again to Brussels, where he was most graciously received by the Infanta.

In the year 1631 Rubens formed a second matrimonial alliance: his bride was Helena Forman, a young girl of sixteen, belonging to one of the richest and most respectable families in Antwerp. Her extraordinary beauty, modesty, and amiable qualities, have been celebrated by every writer of that day. She frequently served him as a model, and her portrait is found in many of his historical pictures.† The same

\* Scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

† Rubens paid his young bride a truly divine compliment when he painted her in the character of the Virgin Mary receiving the instructions of her mother, St. Anna. This lovely picture is in the gallery of the Academy at Antwerp.—A. J.

year he accepted the office of director of the School of Art in Antwerp; and at his installation he presented a picture to the academy, the subject of which was the Virgin, with the infant Jesus, and Joseph. The renown of Rubens as a painter daily increasing, many of the most considerable princes of Europe were desirous of obtaining some of his works, and as the orders he received were far too numerous to allow of his executing them all with his own hands, he usually contented himself with furnishing the sketches only, leaving the greater part of the works to be executed by his pupils, and then merely putting the finishing touches to the whole.\* We must admit that pictures, in which the figures were painted by such artists as Van Dyck, Soutman, Van Heck, Diepenbeck, and Van Thulden; the landscapes by Wildens or Van Uden;†

\* Sandrart, p. 292.

† Snyders, Wildens, and Van Uden, were employed by Rubens to paint the backgrounds and accessories to his pictures, but were not properly his *pupils*. Among the latter, the two most celebrated were Vandyck and David Teniers, who had sufficient original genius to strike out a path for themselves distinct from that of their master. Diepenbeck was long in England, and patronised by the famous Duke and Duchess of Newcastle: Fuseli gives him great praise as a designer. Soutmann is better known as an engraver than as a painter. Van Thulden successfully imi-

the animals and other accessories by *Snyders*; may be regarded as successful, and for the most part excellent performances; but it was impossible that they could display such consistency and individuality in conception and execution as those which emanated from the pencil of *Rubens* alone.

Without the co-operation of such pupils it would have been impossible for him to finish his large Altar-pieces in the incredibly short space of time required. Thus he painted, about this period, the celebrated altar-piece for the church of *St. Roch*, in *Alost*, in eight days, representing that saint healing the sick

tated the style of his master, and was his principal assistant in painting the *Luxembourg Gallery*. *Van Hoeck* attained to considerable eminence, particularly in portraits. Some other disciples of *Rubens*, who assisted in his atelier, deserve honourable mention: *Jacob Jordaens*, for instance, who emulated his master as a colourist, and in his free and spirited handling. *Sir Joshua Reynolds* says, "that his horses are but little inferior to those of *Rubens*," which is saying much; but he is a coarse painter, without grace, dignity, or propriety, in his conception of character: his finest work, "the *Satyr* blowing hot and cold," is, I believe, in the *Munich Gallery*. *Francis Wouters* came to England in 1637, was patronised by *Charles I.*, and appointed painter to the Prince of Wales, after *Charles II.* *Erasmus Quilien*, or *Quellinus the Elder*, and *Van Egmont*, obtained considerable wealth and reputation in their art, without attaining either excellence or fame.—A. J.

of the plague. On such occasions it was often arranged that for every day employed upon a picture he should receive one hundred florins.\*

His occupations as an artist were interrupted, in the year 1633, by another diplomatic mission. After receiving instructions from the Marquis Aytona, he went to Holland to endeavour to arrange a truce. With his usual address he had already made much progress in his negotiations, when they were abruptly broken off, owing to the sudden death of Maurice, Prince of Orange. Shortly afterwards, the apprehensions excited at the court of Brussels by the military successes of the Dutch, caused Rubens to be sent to Holland again, and he succeeded this time in inducing the States General to enter into a regular treaty of peace with the plenipotentiaries of Spain. He had not been long returned from this mission, when he received the painful news that the Infanta Clara Eugenia Isabella, his oldest and most esteemed patroness, had died on the 1st of December, 1633.

About the year 1635, Rubens became subject to frequent fits of gout, which attacked him often in the hands, and completely disabled him from paint-

*About ten pounds sterling.*

ing more than a small part of his pictures himself; from this period, therefore, he was chiefly employed with pictures of such a size as could be placed on his easel, and landscapes were the subjects which he generally preferred: many of these he finished at his country residence, Stein, near Mechlin. About the same period he withdrew from all business, and broke off all correspondence with persons at a distance; yet the interest which he took in art and science still survived in all its former enthusiasm, as is shown by the letters which he wrote in the last years of his life, and by the intercourse which he still kept up with artists and men of learning. Amongst the latter, Gaspar Gevaerts, a distinguished scholar, who at a later period was appointed counsellor to the Emperor Ferdinand III., was particularly esteemed by him.\*

The Cardinal Infant Don Ferdinand, brother to Philip IV. of Spain, had succeeded Isabella as Regent

\* It would be pleasant to be assured that Vandyck's inimitable portrait in our National Gallery, known as that of Gevaerts, or Gevartius, represented this distinguished friend of Rubens; but, in the opinion of Dr. Waagen, it not only is not this Gevartius, but the name is altogether supposititious: and his reasoning appears conclusive. See his "Art and Artists in England," vol. i. p. 223.—A. J.

of the Netherlands, and was to enter the city of Antwerp in state, in the month of May, 1635. The authorities, wishing to give due splendour and interest to the ceremony, applied to Rubens to furnish them with designs for eleven triumphal arches.\* These sketches he accordingly made, assisted by Gevaerts, in the invention of the allegories, which were all in allusion to the character and illustrious deeds of the prince.† He was prevented, however, by a fit of the gout, from explaining them himself to the Regent on the day of his public entry, though he was indemnified afterwards by a visit which the Prince paid him in his own house. On this occasion they discoursed for a long time together, and the Prince expressed his admiration of the numerous works of

\* These appeared in a work of engravings at Antwerp, in 1635, under the title, “*Triumphus Austriacus*,” &c., with forty-three plates, and a learned text by Gevaerts.

† Of these sketches, which, though painted under the influence of ill health and declining years, exhibit all the fire and spirit of an unimpaired fancy, some are preserved in the Academy at Antwerp, and a few are in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna; among the latter, I remember a fine colossal figure of Don Ferdinand himself, much like a warrior, and very unlike a cardinal.—A. J.



art with which Rubens, sparing no expense, had adorned his abode a second time.

Nothing, however, inspires such a favourable idea of the disposition and general structure of the mind of Rubens as his conduct towards other artists ;—conduct the more worthy of admiration, as he himself, owing to his great talents, wealth, and distinguished connexions, occupied a station in society at once honourable and important. His doors were open at all hours, even when he was at work, to every artist desirous of profiting by his aid or advice ; and although he seldom paid visits, yet he was ever ready to inspect the works of any artist who wished it : on these occasions he invariably gave his opinion with candour according to the principles of art ; nay, he would frequently take up the brush himself, and touch such parts as required it. In almost every picture he was sure to discover something good, and it seemed to afford him real pleasure to acknowledge the merits of a brother artist, and to set them forth on every opportunity. Upon being told that Van Dyck, after his return from Italy, complained that the profits from his works were not sufficient for his maintenance, he went the very next day to him, and purchased all

the pictures which he found completed in his atelier.

The manner in which he conducted himself towards his enemies, and those who were envious of his brilliant reputation, was as wise as it was generous. The insinuations of the painter Rombouts, who did all in his power to detract from his merits, he refuted by his famous work, the descent from the cross, in the cathedral of Antwerp. To Abraham Jansens, who challenged him, for a wager, to paint a picture with him, and submit their rival pretensions to the decisions of the public, he replied, that this was quite unnecessary, as he had long submitted his works to the judgment of the whole world, and he advised him to follow his example.\* The slanderous detractions of Cornelius Schut he requited in another manner. He paid him a visit, praised his pictures, and, inquiring their prices, declared that he would buy them himself for the sums named: further he assured him, that, in case he should ever be

\* Jansens had in his time no superior but Rubens; he would, perhaps, have equalled him, had he not wasted his energies and his substance in a life of dissipation. His *chef-d'œuvre*, "the Raising of Lazarus," is in the Munich Gallery.—A. J

without employment, he might always reckon on his assistance.\* And when his enemies had spread the report abroad that he employed Snyders, Van Uden, and Wildens, because he was himself incompetent to paint animals and landscapes; he replied to the imputation by executing with his own hand four landscapes and two lion hunts in such a manner as to silence the most envious. In further confirmation of Rubens's good sense and practical turn of mind, an anecdote has been related by Sandrart. Brendel, an alchymist from London, of celebrity in those days, once paid a visit to our artist, assuring him that he was on the eve of discovering the philosopher's stone, and offering to divide with him the expected gains if he would advance a sum sufficient to prepare

Cornelius Schut had been one of the scholars of Rubens, and rose to high eminence in his art; " but the superior merit of Rubens prevented him from being as much distinguished and employed as he justly deserved. So great a disappointment and obstruction to his making a figure in his profession inspired him with an implacable enmity to Rubens; but that great man, instead of expressing any resentment, was only more active and zealous to procure him employment by a generous and zealous recommendation of him and his performances. — *Vide Lives of the Painters* — A. J.

the laboratory and the necessary materials. Rubens, after listening to him with patience, replied, " Master Brendel, you have come just twenty years too late, for so long is it since I first discovered the true philosopher's stone in my palette and pencils."\*

In the beginning of the year 1640, the attacks of gout became so frequent and violent that Rubens at length fell a victim to his disorder, in the sixty-third year of his age. His splendid funeral procession included all the clergy and men of distinction in Antwerp, as well as all the artists : a crown of gold was borne before his bier. His remains were placed in his family chapel, in the church of St. James, the altar of which was adorned by one of his own most admirable works, representing the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus, with the adoration of Saint Bonaventura. This picture contains, besides, the portraits of three females, (two of them being his own wives,) and that of the artist himself, who is represented as Saint George ; in the foreground are Saint Jerome and the lion.†

\* Sandrart, p. 292. Van Dyck, the celebrated pupil of Rubens, did not resemble him in practical sense ; on the contrary, he allowed himself to be robbed of a great part of his fortune, as well as of his good temper, by these gold-making projects.

† Engraved by Paul Pontius.

This picture is singularly attractive, from the energy and life in the figures and the splendour of the colouring. In accordance with the wish of his family, his friend Gevaerts wrote a Latin epitaph, in which the merits of Rubens as a man of learning, a painter, and a statesman, are commemorated ; and further it is, stated, that the chapel and the monument were erected to his memory by his widow and children : it does not, however, redound to their honour, that the plain slab, on which this inscription is engraved, was not really put up till a century after the death of Rubens, by one of his descendants, Jean Baptist van Parys, a canon of the church of St. James.\* In his domestic character, Rubens had shown himself as blameless as in all the other relations of life. His eldest son, Albert, who succeeded him as secretary of the privy council, was a man of extraordinary learning ; at his death, which took place at an early age, he left behind him several classical dissertations, from which Grævius published a “ *De re vestiaria Veterum* ;” and at a later period, he reprinted it in the sixth volume of his *Thesaurus of Roman Antiquities*. The catalogue of the works of art in the possession of Rubens at the

\* The account may be found in *De Piles* and *Basan*.

time of his death, contained three hundred and nineteen pictures alone. At first, it was the intention of the family to sell the whole collection by auction; but this did not take place; and the pictures, after being valued by Franz Snyders, Wildens, and Nicholas Maermaus, were sold separately by private contract. The principal purchasers were the King of Spain, the Emperor, the King of Poland, the Elector of Bavaria, and Cardinal Richelieu, the latter of whom obtained a great part of the most valuable works. The collection of gems and cameos, which is said to have been extremely valuable, together with his medals and carvings, were bought altogether by the King of Spain.

Now that we have become acquainted with the character and leading circumstances connected with the life of Rubens, we are in some degree prepared to form a just estimate of him as an artist; and, in pursuance of this object, it will be necessary to look back to the condition of painting in the Netherlands at the period when he began his career.

The great school of the brothers Van Eyck, which united with a profound and genuine enthusiasm for religious subjects, a pure and healthy feeling for nature, and a talent for portraying her minutest details with truth

and fidelity, had continued till the fifteenth century, and in some instances even later, to produce the most admirable works, combining the utmost technical perfection in touch and finish with most vivid and beautiful colouring. To this original school, however, had succeeded a perverted rage for imitating the Italian masters, which had been introduced into the Netherlands by a few painters of talent, particularly by Jean Mabuse and Bernhard van Orley. To display their science by throwing their figures into forced and difficult positions, and strongly marking the muscles, by which they thought to emulate the grandeur of Michael Angelo, and to exhibit their learning by the choice of mythological and allegorical subjects, became the aim of succeeding painters ; and before these false and artificial views of art, the spirit of religious enthusiasm, and the pure *naïve* perception of the truth and beauty of nature, gradually disappeared. In proportion as the Flemish painters lost the proper conception of form, and the feeling for delicacy and beauty of outline, it followed, of course, that they became more and more removed from nature in their desire to rival each other in the forced attitudes of their figures, and in the exhibition of nudity, until,

at last, such disgusting caricatures were produced as we find in the works of Martin Hemskerck or Franz Floris, artists who were even deficient in good colouring, the old inheritance of the school. Some few painters, however, whose feeling for truth and nature repelled them instinctively from a path so far removed from both, took to portraying scenes of real life with considerable humour and vivacity, or they delineated nature in her commonest aspects with great minuteness of detail: and thus *tableaux de genre* and landscape painting originated. Despite the great merits of many of these works, they are nevertheless deficient in unity and simplicity of character. In the conception they display a vulgar taste, and a frequent straining after singular and extravagant effects. The artists of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century appear to most advantage in portrait painting; for here they were reduced to the necessity of copying nature; but, even in this department, few are altogether exempt from affectation and stiffness.

Although a few isolated efforts to introduce a better state of things were visible towards the end of the sixteenth century, it was reserved for a mind of no common power to bring about a complete revolution in



a mind was that of Rubens himself. A thorough Fleming in temperament and character, he led his countrymen back to the very point whence sprang their original excellence, the lively perception of natural forms, and the developement of the faculty of colour. But the spirit of the times in which he lived, and the peculiar temper of Rubens's own mind, naturally prevented these characteristic qualities from being exhibited now as they would have been in the age of the Van Eycks. It had been the aim of the latter, as far as their means allowed, in the colouring as well as in the execution of their works, so to imitate nature, that their pictures, whether looked at closely, or contemplated from a distance, should produce, as nearly as possible, the same effect; the principal thing with Rubens, on the contrary, was the *general* effect; and though he painted the details with the greatest truth, he contented himself with making them subordinate to the whole, so as to resemble nature at a certain distance. The means which were at his command in his own time for the accomplishment of his purpose,—a better knowledge of the laws of perspective, and of the *chiaro oscuro*, that breadth of style first introduced by Titian and his school, and then so admirably practised by Michael

Angelo da Caravaggio, and the Caracci,—these he had mastered with the greatest energy during his long residence in Italy, and the more successfully, as they perfectly accorded with the nature of his own genius. But instead of that genuine religious enthusiasm, long since vanished, which had formerly inspired the Van Eycks, so as even to spread a certain solemnity over their scenes of passion, the mind of Rubens was so imbued with the love for dramatic representation, that he imparted life and movement even to subjects which properly demanded a certain calmness and repose in the treatment. A most glowing and creative fancy, inexhaustible in the conception of new forms full of life and vigour, would naturally find even the easiest method of painting tedious, and thus feel the necessity of acquiring some method of transferring its creations to the canvass in the shortest time possible. His rare technical skill, and his extraordinary faculty of colour, aided Rubens admirably in attaining this object. He obtained at once the art of placing, with a master hand, the right tones in the right places, without trying all kinds of experiments with the colours on the pictures themselves; and after he had with ease blended them together, he knew how

to give to the whole picture the last finish by a few master touches in those parts which he had left unpainted for the purpose. This mode of treatment, so characteristic of the turn of Rubens's mind, is the reason why his pictures bear the stamp of an original lively burst of fancy more than those of any other painter. Hence Rubens, beyond any artist of modern times, may be styled a sketcher in the highest and best sense of the word. If the greater part of his pictures bear upon the whole the character of a cheerful, jovial spirit, undisturbed by outward misfortunes, and a strong feeling of self-complacency, still these qualities are more particularly expressed in the style of his colouring. Rubens, as a colourist, might be called the painter of light, as Rembrandt is the painter of darkness. With Rubens, everything is imbued with the pure element of broad light: the different colours are brought close together in luxuriant contrast: but in their harmonious relation to each other they celebrate a common triumph. Thus many of his large pictures, for instance the Assumption of the Virgin in the cathedral of Antwerp, may be said to produce the same effect as a symphony, in which the united sounds of all the instruments blend together

joyously, divinely, mightily. No other painter has ever known how to produce such a full and satisfactory tone of light, such a deep *chiaro oscuro* united with such general brilliancy. Few can be compared to him in the admirable gradations in the keeping of the whole, and in the manner in which each variety of surface is distinctly pronounced; the colouring of his flesh in particular has such a vivid transparency of tone—such a glow of life—that it is easy to understand how Guido Reni should have been struck with wonder upon beholding a picture of Rubens for the first time, and exclaim, “Does this painter mix blood with his colours?”\* The creative fancy of Rubens was capable of conceiving every possible variety of subject at all fitted for the pencil, and the sphere was indeed ample from which his remarkable cultivation of mind enabled him to select. Thus he painted subjects from the Bible, from the legends of saints, from ancient and modern history, and from classical

\* In the same manner it was said of Parrhasius, the great master of colouring among the painters of antiquity, that his women “looked as though they had fed on roses;” and Annibal Caracci said of Caravaggio, that he did not *paint* but *grind* flesh, alluding to the texture and touch as well as the colour.—A. J.

mythology : portraits, and conversation pieces ; battle, and hunting pieces ; grotesques, and landscapes. With regard to fertility of invention, Raphael and Albert Durer are the only modern painters who can be compared with him. There is the greatest difference, however, between Raphael and Rubens in this respect, as Baron von Rumohr has well remarked ;\* for the peculiarity of Raphael consisted principally in the perfect comprehension of his subject, and in proving on the canvass that he had penetrated into its inmost signification ; whereas Rubens made every subject conform to his own most *one-sided* nature, and he accordingly treated all such as were foreign to it in a most capricious manner. Therefore it is, that while all the works painted by Rubens himself bear the true stamp of genius, and captivate us by the originality and freshness of thought exhibited in them, as well as by

\* The Baron C. F. von Rumohr is considered one of the most learned judges of painting and cookery in all Germany. His critical works on art are in high repute : among them may be mentioned the essay on “ Raffaele and his Contemporaries :” on “ the Origin of the Architecture of the middle ages :” on “ Hans Holbein :” and “ the History and Theory of Carving in Wood and Ivory.” (Formschneidekunst.) He has written, moreover, one of the best cookery books extant, under the title of “ Geist der Kochkunst.” (the Spirit of Cookery.)—A. J.

the masterly keeping, the vigour and glow of the colouring, and the talent displayed in the treatment altogether, yet the gratification we derive from them is ever in proportion to the harmony which existed between the subject and his own natural disposition.

To the man's individual nature we may trace the most striking characteristics of the painter,—his turn for dramatic conception, his loose and sketchy treatment. To the jovial, buoyant hilarity of his temper, we owe his decided taste for the powerful, the coarse, the sensual, which allowed him but seldom to approach to a finer appreciation of form, and, only in some few instances, to the dignified expression of elevated and noble, or even of soft and gentle characters. In truth, he was so little able to divest himself of those impressions of the human form which had been early engrafted on his mind in his native country, that even when he copied from other masters—for instance, from Leonardo da Vinci—he unconsciously translated all the heads in his Flemish manner, and gave to the other parts of the body that amplitude and heaviness of character which was usual to him.\*

\* Remarkable in this respect is an engraving by Soutmann of a drawing which Rubens made after the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci, and likewise a copy by Rubens of a picture by Titian, in the new palace at

Generally speaking, it is impossible to derive unmixed pleasure from those works of Rubens in which the subjects are taken from the sacred writings, where so much of the effect depends on the elevated expression of moral beauty, sanctity, purity, and calm beatitude; even in the treatment of subjects from the mythology of the ancients, indelibly associated in our minds with the idea of divine gracefulness and delicacy of form, Rubens was seldom successful; not only was he naturally deficient in the perception of such qualities, but here more particularly, his rash and rapid treatment, the want of study, defective drawing in the figure, and a capricious and unquiet arrangement of the drapery, are frequently and disagreeably felt. His representations of the Madonna but seldom, and his representations of the Redeemer scarcely ever, excite those ideas which we should consider appropriate and worthy of those divine subjects.

From this general criticism we may except the picture in the Capitulo Prioral of the Escorial, in which the Virgin is represented as standing on the globe, and trampling on a serpent which is writhing beneath Madrid, representing Adam and Eve. The forms, which in the original are sufficiently full, are here still more rounded and ample.

her feet. A distinguished and gifted female critic\* has well described this picture: "The Virgin is a tall, slender, and dignified figure; a heavenly crown, with the rays of glory, just touches her head; she looks like the queen of heaven, and inspires at once veneration and awe. Two angels, most lovely infant forms, stand on the clouds, close to her side, the one holding a palm, the other a wreath of laurel. The expression in the countenance of the Virgin is that of adoration and gratitude; there is something unearthly and inspired in the soul which looks out from her eyes; her dress falls from her waist in rich folds, and a white veil covers her bosom. This picture is so beautiful, in such noble keeping, and so free from that disagreeable voluptuous-

\* The account given in the course of this essay of the pictures in Spain, painted by Rubens, I owe to the copious notes taken by the late Madame de Humboldt (wife of the minister Von Humboldt) during her residence in that country, which have been obligingly communicated to me. They are of the more value, as, Germany excepted, Spain probably contains the greatest number of masterpieces by the hand of Rubens. Owing to these notes, and the sphere of my own experience, comprising the principal works of Rubens in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and England, I have become acquainted with nearly all the works of this artist.



ness which characterises Rubens's females in general, that it can be contemplated and dwelt on with delight, although hanging on the same wall with a Raphael and a Guido: while it possesses all the advantages which belonged so exclusively to the manner of Rubens,—the most blooming flesh tints, the loveliest colouring.”

Besides this Madonna, there is another in the Adoration of the Three Kings, in the Royal Museum of Madrid. In this instance also, the Virgin, contrary to all custom, is not seated, but standing; the heavenly beauty of the features, and still more the dignity of the form, with the benign and graceful inclination of the body, render it exceedingly attractive.\*

The communion of the dying Saint Francis, who is kneeling before the altar, supported by his brethren of the order, a principal ornament of the Antwerp Academy, must be included in this list of exceptions, on account of the dignified expression and the noble heads. In this picture, executed in the year 1619, we remark the influence of the Caracci in the composi-

\* A lithograph of this picture has lately appeared in a work on the Gallery of Madrid, by F. de Craene: it is, unquestionably, the finest picture of this class which Rubens ever painted.

tion, and that of Michael Angelo da Caravaggio in the rare depth of the *chiaro oscuro*.

Such subjects as the three Goddesses and Paris;\* Venus Anadomyomene;† Latona with her Children, Apollo and Diana;‡ and the Three Graces, are,§ in the way in which Rubens has treated them, ill calculated to satisfy the demands which, as to form and character, are unconsciously made, and are, therefore, more worthy of consideration for the manner in which the leading idea is conceived and developed, than for the expression of individual character.

His taste for allegorical subjects Rubens derived from his predecessors, the Flemish painters of the sixteenth century, particularly from his master, Otho Venius. As already remarked, he was not in general free from a perverse and tasteless treatment of works of this class; yet several of them, owing to a wonderful life and vigour in the conception, and their superiority over the cold and formal representations of other artists, are worthy of distinguished praise.

\* In the New Palace at Madrid. Engraved by A. Lommelin.

† Engraved by P. de Jode.

‡ In the Munich Gallery.

§ In the Academy at Madrid. Engraved by P. de Jode.

Besides his three great allegorical works, already mentioned, the life of Marie de Medicis, the apotheosis of James I. of England, and the triumphal arches in celebration of the entrance of the Cardinal Infant Ferdinand into the city of Antwerp, Rubens treated a considerable number of religious as well as profane subjects in the form of allegory. Among the first, the most remarkable for grandeur of composition are six pictures representing the glory and the triumph of the Catholic Church:\* there is, however, reason to be-

\* Engraved by S. a. Bolswert, N. Lauwers, and Adrian Lommelin. These belonged to a series of nine pictures which Rubens was commissioned by the Duke d'Olivarez to paint for the church of the monastery of the Carmelites at Loeches, about twenty miles from Madrid. They have been separated, however, of late. Four of the principal pictures are in the gallery of the Marquis of Westminster: who purchased them from the Danish minister, M. de Bourke, for the sum of £10,000. They are assuredly most magnificent compositions, particularly that of the "Fathers of the Church:" and I do not know why Dr. Waagen, in his account of the Grosvenor Gallery, should mention them rather in a disparaging manner. One of the series, "The Triumph of Charity," was in 1839 in the possession of Joshua Taylor, Esq. Two apparently remain in Spain; and two others, now in the Louvre, were presented to the French commandant at Loeches, in consideration of his affording military aid in carrying off the pictures from the convent, the people of the town having risen to oppose this act of spoliation. The account of the

lieve that only the sketches for these works were painted wholly by Rubens. The most beautiful of all the mythological allegories is that which Rubens painted for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Mars is represented hurrying forward, scattering death and destruction abroad, whilst Venus and Cupid are vainly attempting to arrest his progress; the Arts and Sciences, personified, are cast down beneath his feet, as the first victims. This picture, which Rubens finished entirely with his own hand, forms one of the treasures of the Pitti Palace. A beautiful study of the same subject is in the collection of the poet Rogers in London.

It is very interesting to observe how well Rubens has generally managed to treat that class of religious subjects which in his days was most in vogue, (namely, the legends of the later saints, and particularly such as had for their object the glory of the order of the Jesuits,) in accordance with the dramatic turn of his own mind, so as to afford him an opportunity of producing some of his most perfect and beautiful works.

transaction, which took place in 1808, when the Peninsular war was at its height, would form a most picturesque chapter in the memoirs and adventures of famous pictures.—A. J.

First, and superior to all others, is the picture which was originally painted for the church of the Jesuits in Antwerp, but which is at present in the Imperial Gallery of the Belvedere at Vienna — St. Ignatius Loyola casting out devils.\* The boldness of the whole composition, the striking manner in which the action is represented, the admirable keeping in the masses, the vigour of the colouring, and the ease and freedom of the execution, render this a most effective picture, and one of the most favourable specimens of the peculiar style of Rubens. A *pendant* to this, the St. Francis Xavier raising the dead and healing the sick, must be mentioned on account of the same perfections. This picture was likewise painted for the church of the Jesuits, and is now in the Gallery of the Belvedere.† To these two noble pictures must be added a third,

\* Engraved by Marinus.

† Engraved by Marinus.

These two pictures hang near each other in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, and the eye dwells first on one, then on the other, unable to decide which is the greater production. My own taste led me to prefer the St. F. Xavier, though I believe the other is the finer picture. They are most wondrous specimens of what Dr. Waagen calls the dramatic style of Rubens, full of action, movement,—telling a whole history in one scene.

The Empress Maria Theresa purchased these pictures, and gave for

painted by Rubens for the church of St. Martin in Alost, and long in the gallery of the Louvre, but which, I have reason to believe, has been reclaimed from the French, in 1815, and restored to this church. In the upper part of the picture, St. Roch is fervently imploring the aid of Christ for the sufferers by the plague, who, in the lower part of the picture, are seen directing their imploring looks upwards towards their Redeemer and Intercessor.\*

But Rubens's natural taste for striking contrast and violent action is strongly displayed in the peculiar and characteristic manner in which he has conceived a variety of subjects of the like nature. Thus, in a picture which he painted for the church of the Franciscans in Ghent, now in the Museum at Brussels, Christ is represented in the clouds as full of wrath, and about to hurl his thunderbolts to destroy the sinful world, while the Virgin Mary, arresting his arm with her left hand, and pointing with her right to her bosom, and St. Francis, spreading his garment as a screen

each the sum of 13,000 florins. (about £2,000 :) a small sum for *them*, but a large sum for *her*, who was neither lavish with regard to money, nor had any predilection for art.—A. J.

\* Engraved by Paul Pontius.

† Engraved by Sanderen.

over the earth, earnestly intercede for compassion. It need hardly be observed, that such a conception of the character of the Redeemer is altogether inconsistent with the real spirit of Christianity: the picture is nevertheless wonderfully effective, and quite in accordance with the ideas of the Franciscans, who, from an early period, were fond of considering their saint as a second mediator. A similar subject, with the exception only that St. Dominick and many other saints are imploring the mercy of Christ, as well as St. Francis, was painted by Rubens for the church of the Dominicans in Antwerp, and is now in the public gallery at Lyons. Lastly, in a picture in the possession of the King of Spain, the subject of which is the daughter of Herodias, she is represented, according to Madame de Humboldt, in a manner altogether unusual, in the act of hurrying along with the head of the Baptist in her hands.

But in subjects which really required to be treated in a dramatic style, more particularly in those wherein the expression of power, grandeur, and strongly excited passions, were admissible, and where he consequently could give free scope, unshackled, unreproved, to all the inspirations of his genius, there we recognise

Rubens in all his glory. I have no hesitation in pronouncing him the greatest of all modern painters, when he had to deal with subjects depending on the momentary expression of powerfully excited passion, which can only be firmly seized upon and developed in the imagination.

Well acquainted with Roman history, owing to his early classical studies, Rubens had also a sort of natural sympathy with the peculiar greatness of the Roman character, and, in consequence, he seems to have painted with particular enthusiasm all subjects connected with their annals. The most admirable in this department are six pictures now in the gallery of Prince Lichtenstein at Vienna, which represent in succession the leading incidents in the history of the consul Decius Mus.\* There is in these pictures a simple gravity and grandeur in the personages, an energy of action, a tone of colour, deep, brilliant, and perfectly harmonising with the subject,

\* It appears to me the whole tendency of Rubens's mind and genius might be called *Roman*, in contradistinction to *Greek*;—Roman, in its grandeur, its vastness;—in a sort of irregular contempt for the more refined rules of art,—in the tincture of sensuality and ferocity, depraving at times the finest productions of his pencil.—A. J.



which altogether bring before us the heroic virtues of the ancient Romans in a manner the most captivating and the most imposing. I must likewise mention here twelve pictures representing events from the history of Constantine,\* formerly in the Orleans gallery, but now scattered through different private collections in England, several of which display great beauties. To these must be added the Rape of the Sabines,† and the Reconciliation between the Romans and the Sabines; the largest pictures of these subjects are in the Escorial; but two masterpieces of smaller size, in the collection of Lord Ashburton in London, owing to the beauty of the composition, the fine

\* Engraved by Nicolas Tardieu. These sketches, for they are not finished pictures, were brought to England, with the Flemish portion of the Orleans Gallery, in 1792. The history of this grand acquisition, the dangers encountered by the purchaser, a Mr. Slade, and the artifices to which he had recourse in their removal; the indignation and threats of the French painters, crowding round the packages, and in despair, to see this rich collection carried out of their country, would form a striking chapter in the biography of pictures. The twelve sketches of the history of Constantine were valued, as a series, at £1,000; but no one having come forward to purchase them, they were, unfortunately we must allow, dispersed among various purchasers, and brought double the sum.—A. J.

† Engraved by Martenasie.

feeling for form, and the spirited treatment, are among the most admirable works by the hand of Rubens which I have ever beheld.\*

Among the subjects taken from the sacred writings, it was natural that the expulsion of the fallen angels, the fall of the damned, and the last judgment, should best suit the character of his mind. He has, in fact, painted these subjects several times, though not always with equal success. The downfall of the angels, in the gallery of Munich, is a work of remarkable power:—the boldness in the idea of the tumbling dragon and the devils, and the expression of their impotent rage, is most striking. At the same time the drawing is executed with more care than is usually found in the works of Rubens. Despite the medley of so many figures falling together, each is distinctly marked, and the whole produces a wonderful effect. The Expulsion of the Damned, in the same gallery, although admirably painted, and containing many proofs of talent in the conception, is too overloaded with details

\* The small finished composition of the Rape of the Sabines is in our National Gallery. This picture, so highly admired by some connoisseurs, did not please Dr. Waagen; and he criticises it severely, and I think justly, in his notes on the National Gallery.—A. J.

and the lines are here and there too complex and distracting, to allow of an agreeable general effect. This picture, however, will always offer a remarkable specimen of the highly *drastic*\* quality of the artist's imagination. One of the least satisfactory productions is a sketch, Christ enthroned on a rainbow, receiving the blessed, as they are brought up to him by angels. Several figures are attached to one another, hanging at full length, by which disagreeable lines are produced, and the whole involuntarily calls to mind a mass of worms creeping amongst one another. So much the more brilliant is the so-styled *small* Last Judgment in the Munich Gallery. Very happily, and with a proper feeling of his own powers, Rubens has here given only a corner in the background to the Blessed, whose heavenly calm and ethereal existence he was incapable of expressing; and he has devoted the whole of the remaining space to the fall of the Damned, his true sphere. Whilst the devils are dragging the condemned into the abyss, the angel Michael is hurling his lightning at them from above. In spite of the confusion in

\* German *drastische*. No word less effective could express what the writer means to describe—the immediate and strong working power of the graphic genius of Rubens.—T.

the falling figures, amongst which the boldest foreshortenings and every variety of attitude are hazarded with success, the separate groups are easily distinguishable, and the whole produces an admirable effect by the broad manner in which the light is managed. The colouring is powerful, but not extravagant; the treatment particularly easy and clever. I agree with many other amateurs of the fine arts, that the much-praised Last Judgment\* in the same gallery does not merit the celebrity which it has long enjoyed; for, apart from the theatrical attitude of Christ, the resurrection of the flesh in the clumsy bodies of the blessed has by far too great a preponderance in proportion to the insignificant expression of the faces; and however well such massive bodies may be adapted for falling, they are not fitted to give the spectator an idea of their capacity for soaring in the air; and even the conception of the Condemned appears poor and ineffective, when compared with the large picture of the Fall of the Angels, or the small Last Judgment. The absence of life in the greater part of the heads, the heaviness and dinginess in the colouring, in comparison with that of other pictures by Rubens, the exaggeration in the reflected lights, and the want of confidence and

\* Engraved by Corn. Visscher.

ease in the treatment, make it probable that this is one of those pictures which were painted for the most part by the pupils of Rubens, and to which he himself added but a few touches.\*

To this class of compositions may be added the large picture which Rubens painted for the cathedral of Freising, now in the Munich Gallery, the subject of which is taken from the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse. The Virgin, with the new-born Saviour in her arms, is soaring aloft on the wings of an eagle, and surrounded by a flood of light. The serpent, encircling the moon on which she stands, writhes beneath her feet, whilst God the Father extends his protecting sceptre over her from above. Further down, the archangel Michael, clothed in armour, is seen in fearful combat with the seven-headed dragon, which is attempting to devour the child. Although struck with

\* As Rubens was in general more successful in his large than in his small compositions, it is remarkable that the large Last Judgment, and the large Fallen Angels, in the Munich Gallery, should be inferior to the two small pictures of the same subjects, but so it is; they are every way inferior, not in conception merely, but in execution. Of the small picture of the Fallen Angels, Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "It is impossible to do justice to the genius of Rubens without having seen it;" and after pointing out its merits with enthusiasm, he pronounces it "one of the greatest efforts of genius that ever the art has produced."—A. J.

the lightning, the dragon is striving to twist his tail round the legs of the angel, and seizes the cloak of the Virgin with one of his heads. Other infernal monsters, writhing with impotent rage, are seen tumbling with the dragon into the flaming abyss. This picture is one of the most splendid of all Rubens's works, and produces an extraordinary effect, from the strongly-marked contrasts, the wild mingling of the sublime and fantastic in the style of the invention, and the wonderful animation and fire in the conception of the different parts.

Other subjects taken from the Bible have also been executed by Rubens with singular success. The following are the principal :

The Judgment of Solomon ;\* and the host of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, routed by the angels of the Lord ; both in the gallery at Munich : the horror, confusion, and tumult into which the Assyrian host has fallen at the apparition of the angel of destruction descending from heaven in a stream of light, are portrayed with wonderful energy and spirit.†

Samson overpowered by the Philistines, likewise in the Munich Gallery. The haste and eagerness of the Philistines, the fruitless resistance of Samson, and

\* Engraved by B. a. Bolswert.

† Engraved by Soutmann.

the malicious joy of the false Delilah, are admirably expressed; and the management of the light, and transparency of the *chiaro oscuro*, are of uncommon excellence.

The Resurrection of Lazarus, another fine picture of this class, is in the Royal Museum at Berlin. The painter has very happily profited by the dramatic incidents which this favourite and oft-repeated subject presented to his fancy. The characters and the expression are more elevated than usual in the works of Rubens; the colouring is uncommonly bright, the execution is broad and spirited, and the treatment of the whole harmonious and beautiful.\*

Equal, perhaps, even superior to any of these, is the celebrated Conversion of Saint Paul, in the collection of Mr. Miles, of Leigh Court near Bristol.† In this picture, the spirited horse, with the rich flowing mane, is represented as having fallen on his knees, while Saul, who has been thrown over his head, lies prostrate on the ground: dazzled by the heavenly splendour, his eyes are closed, and the paleness of terror

\* The same composition, though containing many more subordinate figures, is engraved by B. a. Bolswert.

† Admirably engraved by a. Bolswert.

overspreads his noble features. Judging from the attitude of the arms, which express in such an incomparable manner the irresistible influence of a supernatural power, Rubens must have had the Ananias of Raphael full in his recollection. Above, amid a stream of light, Christ appears; one of the followers of Saint Paul remains near him; the rest are seized with a panic, and their horses in sympathetic terror are wildly starting and rearing.

But in this class of subjects, (the scriptural,) the celebrated Descent from the Cross, in the Cathedral at Antwerp, unquestionably occupies the first place. All the figures are zealously occupied around the body of Christ; and thus combine into a single large group, which, owing to the admirable concentration of the light, has a still further *oneness* of effect. To this must be added a truly luminous, though not exaggerated colouring, a more correct study of the individual parts, and a much more careful execution than is usual with Rubens, yet without detracting in the least from his characteristic freshness and originality of conception, as displayed in the general treatment.\*

\* Louis XIV. wished to possess this picture, and employed the Maréchal de Villeroi to treat with the city of Antwerp for the purchase; but



Nothing, however, is more characteristic of the dramatic turn of Rubens's mind, than his choice of subjects from the mythology of the Greeks and the works of the ancient poets; and in nothing has he displayed neither the influence of the Grand Monarque, nor the offer of a sum of money enormous for that time, availed. To the credit of the merchant-citizens be it spoken, they rejected every temptation, and the king was obliged to content himself with a fine copy, painted for him by Gaspar van Opstal in 1704.

Dr. Waagen has well remarked, that the *dramatic* tendency of Rubens's mind led him to treat in the dramatic style subjects for which it was least appropriate. Perhaps the most striking instance of this is his renowned picture of the Crucifixion in the Church of the Recollets at Antwerp. Here the conception of the subject,—the scenic illusion of the perspective,—the variety and bustle of the incidents,—the dreadfully true delineation of merely physical agony,—are all in thorough harmony with the peculiar constitution of Rubens' own mind, but not suitable to the mournful sublimity, the solemn grandeur and *oneness* of effect proper to such a scene. It is too real in its terrors—too terrible in its reality; too picturesque in the arrangement and accessories:—

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare !  
 Close those wan lips ! let that thorn-wounded brow  
 Stream not with blood—it mingles with thy tears !  
 Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,  
 So thy sick throes shake not the crucifix !

It is an earthly tragedy, not a divine mystery. Still it remains “a most

more freedom, originality, and poetry, than in the manner in which he has treated them. Amongst his numerous works of this class, Castor and Pollux carrying off the Daughters of Leucippus, in the Munich

wonderful monument of the daring genius of the painter—the grandest picture in the world for composition, drawing, and colouring.” A defect, perhaps unavoidable, lies in the crosses not being sufficiently elevated, from the necessity of bringing the nearest figure, that of the reprobate thief, within the compass of the picture. The inimitable beauty and pathos of the countenance and attitude of the Magdalen, have been often noticed with just admiration.

To the above list of scriptural and historical subjects dramatically treated, may be added some other well-known pictures. I. “The Meeting between Abraham and Melchisedek,” figures life-size, in the gallery of the Elector of Hesse Cassel. (This gallery, which in 1833 was in great confusion, ill arranged, and ill lighted, contains a few invaluable pictures, with a greater proportion of absolute bad ones than I ever remember to have seen in any one collection, public or private : and this is saying much.) II. “The Woman taken in Adultery,” in the possession of Mr. Miles of Leigh Court. This picture, which is entirely painted by Rubens’s own hand, is perhaps of a not much later date than the Descent from the Cross. This seems to be confirmed by the elevation of feeling and the soberness of the colouring. The culprit, whose whole figure is represented with much judgment, stands, with an expression of contrition, in the middle. The calm dignity of Christ at her right hand forms a striking contrast with the vulgar appearance of a corpulent priest, and the cold, refined malice of a tall, lean Pharisee on the other side. That

Gallery, is worthy of being first mentioned.\* The Dioscuri, mounted on spirited steeds, one of which is wildly rearing, are about to carry off the two dam-

Rubens intended to represent in them Luther and Calvin I do not believe, as they are not like them, and Rubens might easily have obtained portraits of both. Another man of a dignified appearance is said to be the portrait of his master, Otto Venius. The flesh is in a very full tone; the careful execution admirably fused. This celebrated picture, which is in an extraordinary state of preservation, is said to have been painted for the family of Van Knyf at Antwerp. III. "The Return of the Holy Family from Egypt," at Blenheim, a picture which Dr. Waagen thinks, from the general resemblance of style and character of the Virgin, must have been painted before the Descent from the Cross; "the ingenuousness and depth of feeling, the cool, serene, subdued mourning tone in which the whole is most carefully carried through, make this work one of the most delightful and remarkable productions in the extensive sphere in which Rubens laboured; it is particularly calculated to please those lovers of art who do not relish his usual more arbitrary and fantastic manner. IV. "A Roman Charity," also at Blenheim, in which this difficult and delicate subject is treated with exceeding refinement and discretion; the expression is noble and affecting, and the colouring, as usual, most admirable. V. "St. Ambrosius refusing to allow the Emperor Theodosius to enter the Church at Milan." Figures life-size. This picture is in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. A small and beautiful copy of it is in our National Gallery.—A. J.

\* Engraved in mezzotinto by Van Green. There is also an admirable lithograph drawing from this most splendid picture

sels. The calm expression of strength in the male, and the violent but fruitless resistance of the female figures, form a striking contrast. One of the Dioscuri is assisting his brother with his right arm to raise one of the females,—she vainly imploring Heaven for aid,—whilst with his left hand he has seized upon the other sister, who, though thrown backwards, is attempting in despair to escape. Although the Dioscuri are merely represented as two coarse and powerful men, and the naked damsels have only common and rather redundant forms and Flemish faces, yet the picture altogether produces such a striking effect, owing to the admirable manner in which the subject is conceived, the power of imagination which it displays, and the exquisite colouring and keeping, that it would never occur to any unprejudiced spectator to regret the absence of antique forms and character.\*

The next picture of this class, which is worthy of note, is the Rape of Proserpine, in the collection of the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim; a collection which

\* Every one who has stood fascinated before this wondrous picture, thrilled by the spirit of the action,—the breathing, glowing, panting life in the figures,—will sympathise with the editor in the eulogy of Dr. Waagen.—A. J.

contains more original works by the hand of Rubens than are to be found in any other private gallery in Europe. Pluto in his car, drawn by fiery brown steeds, is carrying off the goddess, who is resisting and struggling in his vigorous arms. This picture absolutely glows with that genial fire, with which Rubens seems to have simultaneously conceived and expressed the strong passion of the moment. Here not only are the forms better defined, more slender and less exaggerated, than in general; but, amongst the companions of Proserpine, the figure of Diana is conspicuous for its uncommon grace and beauty. The victorious god of love hovers before the chariot, and the blue ocean, warmly tinted with the sunbeams, forms a splendid background.\*

But the most admirable picture by Rubens in this, or indeed in any other department which I have seen, is the celebrated Battle of the Amazons in the Munich Gallery, originally painted by Rubens for a distinguished connoisseur in art,† Van der Geest. With great judgment he has chosen the moment when the Amazons are driven back by the Greeks over the river Thermodon: the battle takes place

\* Etched by Soutmann.

† Weyerman, vol. i. p. 268.

upon a bridge, and thus the horror of the scene is carried to the highest pitch. Two horses are in savage combat upon the bridge; one of the Amazons is torn from her horse; a second is dragged along by her sable steed. Two other Amazons, with their horses, are falling headlong into the river below, where again several are trying to save themselves by swimming. On the other side, a mounted Amazon, who has just dashed into the water, turns half round, and wounds her pursuer in the same moment; near to her are the dead bodies of several Amazons, which, though already half naked, are about to be robbed of their last vesture. In the distance, beneath the arches of the bridge, other Amazons are seen struggling, in various attitudes, for life and safety. The admirable effect of the whole is increased by a decided and masterly arrangement of the light; the colouring is forcible without being overcharged, and the execution of the principal parts must be called *careful* for Rubens. In the whole range of modern art, there exists no other historical battle-piece worthy of being compared with Raffaello's Battle of Constantine; and, in fact, it has the advantage over the latter in the well-planned concentration of interest, and in the contrast afforded

by the male and female figures, which is admirably employed.\*

In this class of pictures by Rubens, there are several existing in Spain, of such remarkable value and beauty, (according to the accounts of Madame de Humboldt,) that I feel myself called upon to particularise them; and in so doing, I shall borrow the expressive words of Madame de Humboldt herself. The Apotheosis of Hercules, in the new palace at Madrid, is one of the most worthy of note. Hercules is standing in an antique chariot, resting on his club in a remarkably bold and firm attitude: he is looking calmly to the right. Behind him, the flames of his funeral pile rise aloft, whilst two genii are soaring above, the one holding a wreath of laurel over his head, the other guiding the spirited horses through the clear ether. There is another valuable picture by Rubens in the same palace, representing Prometheus carrying off the fire which he has secretly stolen from Olympus. He is advancing swiftly through the air, his face somewhat timidly turned away; his frame is very

\* Admirably engraved by L. Vorstermann, in six sheets, as early as 1623. Latterly an excellent lithograph of this picture by Hohe has appeared in the first number of the "Münchener Pinakothek."

muscular and powerful: the colouring is worthy of Rubens's pencil. In the palace of the Duke of Infantado are the following pictures by Rubens. The youthful Achilles, mounted on the centaur Chiron, who turns his head, and gazes on him; his horse-limbs are of a dapple gray. Achilles bathed in the waters of Styx. And lastly, in another picture, Achilles discovered by Ulysses among the daughters of Lycomedes.\* If we add to these the Battle of the Lapithæ and the Centaurs;† Perseus delivering Andromeda;‡ the Race between Atalanta and Hippomenes; Orpheus rescuing Eurydice from the infernal regions,—all of which are in Spain: the Quos Ego, in the Dresden Gallery; the Fall of Phaeton, in the Lichtenstein

\* These three pictures belong to a series of eight taken from the life of Achilles, which Rubens painted in small size for his patron, Charles I., as designs for tapestry. After the death of the king, they were dispersed. Two of them, Achilles with the daughters of Lycomedes, and Briseis restored to Achilles, are at present in the collection of Lord Vernon: engraved by Franz Ertinger.

† Engraved by P. de Bailliu.

‡ There is also a fine Andromeda at Blenheim, which, from the unusual elegance in the forms, and the sobriety of the colouring, Dr. Waagen supposes to have been painted by Rubens in Italy.—A. J.



Gallery at Vienna;\* Boreas carrying off Orythia,† Nessus and Dejanira,‡ Apollo and Daphne,§ — we shall then be able to form some idea of the number of pictures of this class executed by Rubens, and acknowledge that no other artist has painted so many subjects taken from antiquity, so rich in life, movement, and incident.

How deeply Rubens was imbued with the love for representing scenes of a coarse and sensual character, is proved by the many well-known works of his, in which the Venus Pandemos, and the Drunken Bacchus, are the leading personages; there is such life and energy in the execution of these pieces, and the subjects are altogether of so gross a nature, that many shrink from them at the first glance, finding them repulsive and disgusting. He has likewise painted the subject of Lot and his Daughters three times, and that of Susanna and the Elders he has repeated four times. Of the former subject, one at Blenheim—a present from the Emperor to the great Marlborough—is remarkable for the vile taste in which it

\* Engraved by Pannels.

† Engraved by Spruyt.

‡ Engraved by Pannels.

§ Engraved by Pannels.

has been conceived and executed ; not only are the characters and forms intolerably vulgar and repulsive, but the colouring is bad ; there is much exaggeration in the bluish half-tones, in the red-reflected lights, and in the painting of the flesh.\* Amongst the repetitions of the latter subject, (the Susanna,) there is a picture in the Munich Gallery remarkable for its admirable composition, the faithful expression of low desire in the heads of the elders, and the fine style of the execution ; the figure of Susanna, on the other hand, is disgustingly vulgar in character and expression, and the forms are disagreeably prominent. But it is in his bacchanalian scenes that Rubens has represented sensuality with all its most brutal attributes. No less than thirteen pictures of this class are known by engravings. In most of these the characters and material are the same, but variously combined, and with all the license of a fertile, exuberant fancy :—Old Silenus naked, and in a state of complete drunkenness, led

\* Engraved by W. P. M'Lean.—There is a picture at Blenheim (and another in the Gallery of the Louvre at Paris) representing Lot and his Family escaping from Sodom, of quite a different character—full of dramatic expression in the sentiments and figures, more nobly conceived, and painted with a more temperate truth in the colouring, and more care in the execution, than is usual with Rubens.—A. J.

by two females, presenting every characteristic of the grossest animal nature; in the foreground, perhaps, a fat female faun, unconscious from beastly drunkenness, whilst two little fauns are hanging at her bosom, and intoxicating themselves with her milk; a crew of bacchanals and satyrs reeling and rioting; panthers; occasionally a negro or a negress, grinning with all their might, are introduced as worthy accompaniments, and as a finish to the expresion of such scenes. Among the best works of this class we may reckon a large picture in the gallery at Blenheim,\* another in the collection of Sir Robert Peel,† a third in the Munich Gallery.‡

A comprehension of the coarse and sensual nature which pervaded, and in some sort depraved, the innate artistic talent of Rubens, will enable us to understand how he could even choose the most horrible subjects when once his fancy had been caught by the dramatic incidents which they afforded. These he treated with all his characteristic power and skill: but the very luxuriance of his genius, and his wondrous mastery

\* Engraved in aquatinta by Hodges.

† Engraved by Delaunay and De Folo.

‡ Engraved by Richard van Orley.

over the technical department of his art, conspire to render such subjects more intolerably fearful and repulsive from *his* hand than from that of any other painter. Of this class, the celebrated Crucifixion of Saint Peter at Cologne, a subject which was chosen by Rubens himself from the life of this saint,\* is the most excellent and the least overcharged. The saint is in the act of being nailed to the cross, with his feet uppermost, and his body writhing with agony. His head sinks backwards, whilst the torments which he is suffering are fearfully expressed in his features, and his half open mouth seems to emit a cry of anguish. Six executioners are occupied about him, all of whom, as well as Saint Peter himself, have very robust forms. Above, the angel appears with the martyr's crown, and the palm of victory. The separate parts of this picture are studied with more than usual care; the management of the light, the depth,

\* It was finished about two years before his death; this is shown by a letter of his to a painter at Cologne, named Geldorp, dated July 25, 1637. An extract from this letter is printed in an Annual, "Taschenbuch für Kunst und Laune," für 1801. This Geldorp was probably the son of the well-known painter of the same name, who died at Cologne in 1616: a print of the picture was likewise prefixed to the Annual.

clearness, and richness of the colouring, are most masterly. As it was one of the last, if not the very last, of the large-sized pictures which Rubens painted,\* it has an additional interest, since it proves that he was in the full possession of his powers even at an advanced age. In this class of subjects (those remarkable for the representation of physical horrors) may be mentioned Judith in the act of cutting off the head of Holofernes with a kind of hatchet; the wretch, in the agonies of death, turns up his eyes in a most horrible manner.† Progne showing to Tereus the head of his son after he had devoured the rest of his body.‡ The martyrdom of the holy Saint Lieven;§ his tongue has been torn out, and is held before a dog, who is snapping at it. Saint Justus holding his head, which has just been cut off, in his hands.¶ And lastly, the celebrated

\* This appears from a passage in the same Annual, containing an extract from a letter of Rubens to Geldorp, April 2, 1633, according to which he was occupied with the finishing of this picture at this period.

† Engraved by Corn. Galle.

‡ In the Palacio Nuovo at Madrid. Engraved by an unknown hand.

§ In the Gallery at Brussels. Engraved by Corn. van Caukerken.

¶ Engraved by J. Witdoeck. In the Church of the Annunciation at Antwerp, Sir Joshua Reynolds mentions this picture—truly “a most untoward subject”—with admiration. The surprise of the tyrant, who

Massacre of the Innocents, in the Munich Gallery. This picture seems to me to deserve its great reputation as little as the Last Judgment in the same collection. The subject can derive a really fearful and tragic interest only through a perfectly ideal treatment, such as we see in the engraving of Marc Antonio after Raffaele; whereas the Massacre of the Innocents by Rubens is, in fact, a mere scene from common life, conceived in the *genre* manner, and consequently producing the same repulsive impression with a modern scene of butchery brought immediately before our very eyes. The women, in modern costume, attempt, in their despair, to defend themselves by biting and scratching. One cuts her hand by seizing the murderous knife. To all this must be added, that the light and spirited treatment of Rubens is not to be found in this picture, and still less his admirable colouring.\*

gazes on the martyr with his head in his hands, is naturally and wonderfully expressed, and is an instance of Rubens's peculiar manner of placing the figures and characters in relation to each other—that is, *dramatising* his subject. The execution, also, is beautiful;—touched, Sir Joshua says, in such a style that it may be considered a pattern for imitation.—A. J.

\* Engraved by Vorstermann. This is an atrocious picture, which no perfection of execution could reconcile to any lover of art. I

But we will now turn to a more pleasing feature of the mental and moral organisation of this wonderful painter. Owing to his having frequently resided at different courts, and to his constant intercourse with persons of high rank, he had been brought into close contact with all the magnificence and splendour which belonged to those gorgeous times ; hence

cannot now recal, without a shudder, the effect it produced on my own mind. It is a vivid proof that art has its due limits ; that though the purely natural and the purely ideal and artistic blend into each other, yet that the servile imitation of nature, without selection and discretion, becomes in art a palpable falsehood—a contradiction of the truth as regards effect. Thus there can be no doubt that in the real scene the desperate mothers *did* defend themselves by biting and scratching, yet, in the literal representation of these horrors, whatever was tragic and pathetic in the reality is lost in the vulgar, the grotesque, and the ferocious ; and thus the truth of the effect is grossly falsified—the manifest aim of art defeated. The picture (for it is a picture) of the same scene in Holy Writ, in which the attention and the fancy are concentrated on the single image of “ Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted,” is equally true to reality and nature, and far more *artistic* :—I use the word with all reverence.

In addition to the works of a tragic or terrible character enumerated in the text, may be mentioned a famous picture, Queen Thomyris with the head of Cyrus in a basin of blood, which was brought to England with the Orleans Gallery, and is now in the collection of the Earl of Darnley. Engraved by P. Pontius.—A. J.

it was, perhaps, that on every opportunity he delighted in representing the pomp of worldly state, and everything connected with it. Of all the subjects taken from the sacred writings, none afford such a rich field for display as the Adoration of the Three Kings; he has painted this subject no less than twelve times, and his fancy appears quite exhaustless in the invention of the rich offerings of the eastern sages; — costly attire, precious ornaments, golden vases and utensils, massive, gorgeous, and glittering, all painted with wonderful and magical facility. Among the subjects of a worldly character, the history of Marie de Medicis, the triumph of the Emperor Charles V.,\* the Sultan at the head of his Army,† &c., gave him abundant opportunities of portraying Oriental and European pageantry, with rich arms and regalia, and “all the pomp and circumstance of war.”

In contrast with this taste for earthly pomp and grandeur, we find the cheerful, self-contented turn of Rubens's mind delighting in the representation of scenes taken from domestic and simple life, and from the graceful actions and innocent sports of childhood.

\* Engraved by Fra Antonio Lorenzini.

† Engraved by P. Soutmann.



The list of his works of this pastoral character, next to that of his grand dramatic scenes, comprises some of the most beautiful compositions with which, as an historical painter, he has enriched the world of art. Under this point of view we must consider many of his representations of the Holy Family, which are exceedingly attractive, although he has given the Madonna no higher character than that of a simple country girl.

Madame de Humboldt mentions a picture in the new palace at Madrid, the figures in which are about one third the size of life. It is a landscape in which the Virgin Mary, attired as a peasant, is seated with the infant Jesus gracefully sleeping in her lap ; close to her are two females and a knight ; three children are playing with a lamb ; angels are seen in an arbour of roses ; and in the background Joseph is reposing against the trunk of a tree. Madame de Humboldt is eloquent in her admiration of the loveliness and grace of the children, which are exquisitely coloured, and lend the principal charm to the picture.

The Virgin and child, to whom a basket of fruit is

presented by angels,\* and also the Infant Jesus and John playing with a lamb,† belong to this class.‡

Many scenes taken from the Greek mythology are likewise treated in the same pastoral manner. One of the most beautiful of these for the highly poetic conception and rich variety of incident and fancy, is a picture in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, representing the festival of Venus in the island of Cythera.§ Cupid and his attendant gods of love, with Bacchanals, are dancing, offering sacrifices, and doing homage to the statue of the goddess.

Another admirable picture of this class is in the Blenheim Gallery, and was a present from the Emperor to the Great Duke of Marlborough. Venus and Cupid are vainly attempting to detain Adonis. Refined feeling in the treatment, beautiful heads, and

\* One of the first kind is engraved by Alexander Boet, jun.

† Engraved in wood by C. Jeghers.

‡ The Holy Family is a subject in which Rubens seems to have delighted; but he has invariably treated it in the domestic and pastoral, never in the ideal or historical style; two of the most beautiful I can remember are in the Pitti Palace at Florence. There exist sixty-eight engravings of Holy Families painted by Rubens.—A. J.

§ Engraved by Premer.

graceful forms, are united in this work to uncommon warmth, brilliancy, and clearness in the colouring.

There is another picture of this kind in the same gallery, the subject of which is inexpressibly beautiful and attractive. It represents three females occupied in gathering fruit from the trees above; Cupid is reaching it down to them.

There is another and a very large picture in an obscure room of the Academy of Art at Madrid, which is probably not less beautiful than the one just mentioned; the subject is the guilty Calisto brought before Diana; the shame of the culprit, and the anxious interest with which the other nymphs of Diana regard the proceedings, are expressed with great life and truth. This picture, too, displays a greater variety in the forms than is generally found in the works of Rubens.

Another composition, Diana, with her nymphs, reposing after the chase, is remarkable for similar beauties.\*

Besides these, there is a large picture at Buenretiro, representing an old man sitting under a tree with a blue cloak on his shoulders—on his right three other

\* Engraved by T. Loueys. This picture is at Munich.

men are standing, likewise enveloped in cloaks, whilst, on the left hand, three naked nymphs are busied in gathering the fruits, which lie in rich profusion at their feet. Fauns are lurking amidst the foliage. The nymphs in this picture exhibit a style of beauty very uncommon with Rubens.\*

Lastly, the pictures in which children are represented playing with fruit and flowers are of extraordinary beauty. The finest of this class is probably the seven children in the Munich Gallery, dragging along an immense wreath of fruit. The children and fruit rival each other in luxuriance of form, and richness and force of colouring.† Another beautiful group of children is in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna.

\* Apparently this is the same picture which, under the title of "Pythagoras," was exhibited in the Gallery of the British Institution a short time ago, (in 1839.) The fruit is painted by Snyders: it was sold from the collection of Rubens after his death, was afterwards at Buenretiro, but how it found its way to England I know not. The women in this picture hardly merit the praise of Dr. Waagen, but the whole is a splendid study for colour, and glows with life and light.—A. J.

† The fruit is by Snyders. In the same gallery is a lovely Madonna and Child, surrounded by flowers and eleven boy-angels—all exquisitely painted: the flowers are by Velvet Breughel. Those pictures painted by Rubens, in conjunction with Snyders and Breughel, are almost as valua-

We are now to direct our attention to a new and very interesting characteristic of our artist, and consider him as a painter of animals. That the *naïve* instincts, agility, and vivacity of animals must have had a great attraction for Rubens, is easily understood. Those which are remarkable for courage, strength, intelligence, swiftness,—as lions, tigers, wild boars, wolves, horses, dogs,—particularly interested him. He paid especial attention to animals, seized every opportunity of making studies of them from nature, and attained the most wonderful skill and facility in painting them. It is related that he caused a remarkably fine and powerful lion to be brought to his house, in order to study him in every variety of attitude.\* By such

ble as those painted solely by his own hand. His well-known and cordial friendship for both these painters lends them a kind of sentimental interest.—A. J.

\* Weyerman relates, vol. i. p. 287. that Rubens, once observing the lion yawn, was so pleased with this action that he wished to paint it, and he desired the keeper to tickle the animal under the chin to make him repeatedly open his jaws : at length the lion became savage at this treatment, and cast such furious glances at his keeper that Rubens attended to his warning, and had the beast removed. The keeper is said to have been torn to pieces by the lion shortly afterwards : apparently he had never forgotten the affront.

means he succeeded in seizing and portraying the peculiar character and instincts of animals—their quick movements and manifestations of strength, with such perfect truth and energy, that not one among the more modern painters has approached him in this respect.\* His pictures of this class, whether they represent animals alone, or engaged in various combats with men, are worthy of great admiration, and have been always highly valued. Many subjects, taken from the Bible, or from mythology and history,

\* If this had been written after his visit to England, Dr. Waagen would have excepted Edwin Landseer. Every one who has observed the habits of animals, must acknowledge that they have not only strength, intelligence, vivacity—the faculties so admired, and so admirably, so energetically rendered by Rubens, but that the generic characteristics of a species are modified by education and individual temperament, as in the human race; that they have not only instincts but sympathies—not only attachments but sentiments. It is the perfect comprehension of the morals of animal life which has enabled Landseer to give to his animal paintings not only the most vigorous truth of life and nature and movement, but a sort of poetical and dramatic interest, of which his deer-stalking scenes, his “Group of the Queen’s Dogs,” his “Jack in Office,” the “Shepherd’s Grave,” the “Highland Nurse,” and many others, are instances. Even his splendid portrait of the Newfoundland dog, the “Distinguished Member of the Humane Society,” may be called dramatic in conception, for does it not immediately suggest a *before* and *after*?—A. J.

in which animals act a prominent part, may be mentioned here.

Amongst these, Daniel in the Lions' Den, is a celebrated picture; it was in the possession of the Duke of Hamilton in Scotland, in Descamps' time.\* Samson slaying the Lion;† David strangling a Bear, a dead lion and a strangled ram‡ completing the group. Another subject of this class, the Hunting of the Caledonian Wild-boar, has been repeated by Rubens in two famous pictures of large size, one at Vienna,|| the other at St. Petersburg.§ The first of these is admirable for the expression of strength and rage in the animal, and of the various impulses which urge on his pursuers.

As belonging to the historical class, the picture in the Capitol at Rome, Romulus and Remus, suckled by a she-wolf, is most spirited and well conceived.¶

But I must now mention the hunting-pieces in the proper sense. In these, huntsmen, mounted or

\* Descamps' *Vies des Peintres*, tom. i. p. 326. Engraved by M. de Leeuw

† Etched by Quellinus.

‡ Engraved by Pannels.

§ Engraved by Van Kessel.

|| Engraved by Earlom.

¶ Engraved by an unknown hand.

on foot, but generally the former, are represented in furious combat with wild beasts, particularly with lions : the figures are usually the size of life. The most admirable works of this class which have come under my own observation are :

The **Lion Hunt**, in the Dresden Gallery.\* The fury of one of the lions, which has sprung upon the hind quarters of a gray horse, and is tearing down the rider, whose pallid features express the extremity of terror, is wonderfully painted. A lioness, busy in carrying away her young in her mouth, forms an excellent contrast to this wild group.

Another **Lion Hunt**, in the Munich Gallery. Three riders, whose horses are plunging violently, are attacking with their lances a powerful lion, which, in his fury, tears a fourth rider to pieces ; his horse stands paralysed with fear. One huntsman on foot is already dead, another is hard pressed by a she-wolf, but is rescued by a third from his perilous situation.†

The celebrated **Wolf Hunt**, painted in the year 1612, for the Spanish General Legranes, and which at a later period was inherited by the Counts Altamira, and

\* Engraved by Van Snyderhoef.

† Engraved by S. a. Bolswert. A lithograph of the same is in the work on the Munich Gallery, by Piloty.



removed to Madrid, in which city it was seen and admired by Madame de Humboldt. In this picture, which Rubens finished only three years after his return from Italy, his bold creative fancy and dramatic turn of mind are remarkably conspicuous. The rage of one of the wolves, which has seized in its mouth the point of the spear with which it is attacked, the fiery courage of a splendid dapple gray steed, on which Rubens himself is mounted, are expressed with inimitable life and truth; Catherine Brant, the first wife of Rubens, on a brown horse and with a falcon on her hand, is near her husband; a second huntsman on horseback, three on foot, another old wolf, and three young ones, with several dogs, complete this admirable composition, which is most carefully painted in a clear and powerful tone throughout, whilst the flesh parts are well kept down.\* This picture was purchased at Paris for 50,000 francs by John Smith, a dealer in works of art, and is at present in the rich collection of Lord Ashburton in London †

A Boar Hunt, in the Dresden Gallery, and another

\* Engraved by Soutmann, and also by Van der Leeuw.

† An excellent duplicate of this picture is in the possession of Lord Methuen, at Corsham-house.

in Munich, must also be noticed, although the animals in the latter were painted by Snyders.

Amongst his other hunting-pieces, known through the engravings of them, one is worthy of particular notice: three mounted hunters are attacking a hippopotamus and a crocodile; the latter has torn one of the huntsmen to the earth. The whole composition is in the highest degree wild and fantastic, and wonderful for expression and spirit.\*

Among those pictures of which the subjects are devoted exclusively to animals, the most valuable are,

A painting at St. Petersburg, three lions the size of life, two of them playing together: and a picture in the Dresden Gallery; a tigress giving suck to her young; near to her are another tigress and a lion, and in the distance a lion-hunt.

Of the other studies and compositions of this class of subjects, four engravings by A. Blonteling, and two by Hollar, after drawings by Rubens, afford the most favourable specimens.

\* Engraved by Soutmann and by Van der Leeuw. According to John Smith, this picture was to be seen at Schleisheim, near Munich, but when I visited that gallery I did not find it.

Rubens, like Titian, has in many of his historical pictures given sufficient proof of being a landscape painter ; but like him, too, he finished a great number of landscapes, properly so called, no less than thirty-six of which have been engraved ; and it is necessary to become acquainted with these before he can be thoroughly appreciated in this department of painting. It is very remarkable how much the same character of mind is expressed in these works, which we find displayed in his historical creations. His landscapes are of more or less value according as the dramatic, the fantastic, or the portrait-like pastoral predominates ; yet all are alike in the characteristic energy of the conception, and freedom and breadth of execution.

His *dramatic* landscapes show the delight he took in representing tempests of thunder and lightning, the rage of the whirlwind, the elements in their most fearful commotion. Of these the following are particularly worthy of note.

First, a landscape, in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. At the command of Jupiter, destruction falls upon the impious villagers, who have refused a hospitable reception to himself and Mercury : lightning darts through the broken clouds, foaming torrents flood the

wide valley, bearing along in their course the bodies of drowned animals; Philemon and Baucis stand on a well-wooded hill in calm security, and contemplate the fearful spectacle to which the two gods are directing their attention.\*

Secondly, a highly poetic landscape: in the foreground Ulysses is imploring the protection of Nausicaa: in the background the waves are still swelling from the effects of the storm which has cast Ulysses on the beach, and the black clouds are discharging their lightning on the lofty rocks. In the horizon the glorious beams of the rising sun announce a splendid day, and to Ulysses the end of all his sufferings.†

The Shipwreck of Æneas on the Strymphades, taken from the third book of the Æneid. A vessel is cast by the foaming ocean against a rock, on the craggy summit of which stands a lighthouse. Two sailors are still in the sinking ship; some are climbing up the shore, whilst others are warming themselves by a fire: the glorious dawn breaking from the east lights up the dark storm-clouds and the raging sea.

\* Engraved by S. a Bolsweit.

† I believe this picture is in the Pitti Gallery at Florence.—A. J.

This grand picture is in the possession of Mr. Hope in London.\*

In the secondary class of landscapes—those possessing that pastoral character which we have already remarked in his historical works, as proceeding from the inspiration of the moment,—Rubens delighted in giving us the scenery of his native country in all its peculiar aspects: wide plains, in which meadows and fields, with woods and solitary trees, relieve each other; the whole enlivened by various kinds of animals and country people at work. To him belonged a peculiar power of throwing all the magic of poetry and variety over the monotonous character of such scenes, chiefly through the admirable manner in which he arranged the lights. No one knew better how to produce the full effect of contrasted light and shade. Parts of his pictures are resplendent with the broad golden rays of the sun breaking through the clouds, whilst, in other parts, the shadows repose in dark masses of gloom. One of the finest works of this class is the picture known by the name of “*Prairie de Lacken*.” While gazing on this beautiful picture, we are transported in fancy to the enchanting fields of Brabant, in

\* Engraved by S. a. Bolswert.

the neighbourhood of Brussels; the fresh green of the trees, the dewy verdure of the rich meadows, glisten in the sunbeams which burst through the light clouds: amongst the numerous figures in the foreground, two peasant girls, one of whom is carrying a basket of fruit on her head, are particularly attractive. No landscape by Rubens is to be compared with this one in the careful execution of all the parts, and very few approach it in the power, brilliance, and freshness of the colouring. It is at present in the royal collection in Windsor Castle.\* The same gallery contains a larger landscape, which is even grander in conception, and richer in the numerous villages, country-houses, meadows, and water, which are displayed in a large plain.† Another landscape, of a very similar character, in the National Gallery,‡ is, if possible, still more poetical and beautiful. This is the celebrated “Landscape after a Shower,” all trembling in dewy light, and breathing freshness into one’s very soul. Rubens sometimes added to the effect of his landscapes by in-

\* Engraved by Van Uden, and by J. Neefs.

† Engraved by Browne, under the title “Going to Market.” Etched by Van Kessel.

‡ Engraved by George Cooke.

roducing a rainbow, as is seen in two pictures, one at Paris, the other at Munich; or the lingering roseate tints of evening, and the rising moon, contend for mastery, and form a lovely contrast; as in a beautiful picture now at St. Petersburg.

Lastly, there are two remarkable pictures by Rubens, (he seems to have left no aspect of nature unattempted,) which represent falling snow and the starlight heavens. The first, which is at Windsor, exhibits an open cowhouse, in which a peasant family is assembled round a fire, or otherwise occupied. In this picture the separate flakes of snow are given.\* In the other picture, now in the possession of the Poet Rogers, the moon is reflected in water, and the firmament is studded with stars.

Rubens, who was gifted with no common powers of observation, who had lived in various countries, and mingled with different classes of society, must have remarked a thousand things in the common intercourse of social life, which afforded material for his ready and fertile pencil. Thus he painted a number of *tableaux de genre*, which are preferable to most

\* Engraved by Clouet.

works of this class, owing to a larger style of conception, and more freedom and breadth of execution than are usually found in them. In many of these, the dramatic turn of his mind is apparent; in others, his taste for rural or domestic life,

In the dramatic style, those compositions taken from the history of the middle ages are particularly attractive; and above all others I must notice a picture, now in the Palacio Nuevo at Madrid, and described by Mad. de Humboldt. It represents that incident in the life of Rudolph of Hapsburg, which Schiller has so beautifully commemorated in his well-known ballad "Der Graf von Hapsburg:"\* the figures are about one-third the size of life. An aged priest, whose venerable

\* According to the tradition alluded to, Rudolph of Hapsburg, the founder of the Austrian dynasty, being on one of his warlike expeditions, encountered a poor priest who had been called to administer the last sacrament to a dying peasant. The rivers had been swollen by a great storm, so that the priest was unable to pursue his journey. The Count, finding him in this perplexity, mounted him on his own horse, and reverently accompanied him on his sacred mission. Schiller has told this pretty story with his usual grace, but the picture of Rubens is undoubtedly more animated and dramatic. The humorous and most characteristic addition of the perplexed Sacristan is apparently his own invention. I have never seen any engraving of this picture.—A. J.



features are seen in profile, is mounted on a brown horse, his hat under his arm, and holding with both hands the Host before him. He has abandoned the guidance of the horse to the Count of Hapsburg, who holds the reins in his right hand, and walks beside him bareheaded, and with downcast eyes : his fine manly countenance, seen nearly in front, has the softest expression of humility and devotional feeling. Behind these rides the Sacristan, mounted on a gray horse, which is led by the Count's esquire ; the attitude and expression of the holy man are in humorous contrast with the interest and solemnity of the first group. Alarmed at a violent movement of his steed, which has drawn in its hind legs, and planted its fore feet firmly on the ground, he has raised up his own feet, and, being about to fall off, has thrown his left hand over the neck of his horse, to catch hold of its conductor, who, on his part, has grasped the reins near the bit, and attempts to hold in the horse. In his right hand the Sacristan carries a lantern, the door of which has opened, and he unconsciously pricks the horse's flank with its pointed edge, which increases the animal's restiveness. The expression of the face is in thorough keeping with the attitude, without descending to the low comic : each phy-

signomy is marked by the strongest individuality, and the execution is exquisitely and minutely finished ; a thing uncommon with Rubens.

Next to this, the picture in the Royal Gallery at Paris is most worthy of being mentioned : the subject is a tournament in the neighbourhood of a castle : amid the flourishing of trumpets six knights are engaged in violent combat ; the issue is still undecided with two pair of combatants ; one of the third pair, however, is already cast to the ground ; two of the squires of the lists are occupied in gathering up the broken lances ; the sun, setting amid floating clouds, tinges the warriors and the hilly country with a deep glow, and forms a striking contrast with the subdued tones of the rest of the picture.

Other works of this class are, properly speaking, grotesques, and represent scenes of low life. By far the best picture of this kind is the celebrated village fête in the Louvre. A boisterous merry party, of about seventy persons, assembled in front of a country ale-house ; several are wildly dancing in a circle ; others are drinking and shouting ; others, again, are making love. There is in this marvellous picture such a vivid exhibition of jovial sensuality, such a glow of physical

life, and of the animal passions in all their activity, that every other work of this class must appear tame and heavy in comparison. At the same time the intellect displayed in the treatment, the richness and brilliance of the colouring, are worthy of the admirable skill and invention displayed in the composition.\*

Straggling soldiers ill-treating a group of miserable peasants, in the Munich Gallery, is a work of great truth in character and conception, although executed in a light and sketchy manner.†

Another class of *tableaux de genre* by Rubens, the conversation and pastoral pieces, have a very remarkable charm; and those amiable qualities of his mind, which I have already remarked as expressed in the portraits of himself and his first wife, are here particularly observable. The most excellent of these is the famous picture known as the Garden of Love, (styled by the Dutch, Venus's Court of Pleasure,‡) of which so many duplicates exist; but, according to the testimony of those distinguished connoisseurs in art, Sir David Wilkie and Mr. William Woodburn, the

\* Engraved by Tessard. † Engraved by F. van den Wyngaerde.

‡ Venus Lusthof.

picture in the possession of the Duke Infantado at Madrid must be the true original. Several loving couples, in familiar conversation, are lingering before the entrance of a grotto, the front of which is ornamented with a rustic portico. Amongst them we recognise the portraits of Rubens and his second wife, his scholar Van Dyck, and Simon de Vos. One of the women has a Cupid in her lap, she is preventing a second from punishing him with a rod; another little god of love is whispering in the ear of a fair young girl; attendant Loves are fluttering about, amid blooming roses and orange trees: an inward happiness and cheerful composure are impressed on every countenance. The execution is careful, and at the same time easy and full of spirit and feeling; the colouring of every part powerful and yet tender.\*

Next to these may be mentioned two pictures which

\* Engraved by Clouet. The picture of this subject in the Dresden Gallery is eminently beautiful, and if not the *first* transcript of the painter's idea, it must be called an original: it is certainly the genuine work of Rubens's own mind and hand. What renders it yet more interesting and characteristic of the man, is the fact that he must have been nearly sixty when he conceived this gay, charming, epicurean group, which affects the sense and fancy like a bouquet of fresh-gathered flowers.—A. J.

were seen by Madame de Humboldt in the New Palace at Madrid. In a room adorned with numerous pictures of religious and profane subjects, a fair girl is seated before a table covered with flowers, gold chains, and other ornaments; her light blue under-dress and yellow robe are very neatly arranged. With her left arm resting on the table, she holds a small casket of medals in her right hand, and contemplates herself in a looking-glass placed before her: the flesh tints in her arms and neck are beautiful and clear. Cupid stands behind the table, and holds up the portrait of a man. At the other end of the table stands another female in red drapery, adorning herself with flowers which a very pretty Cupid presents to her in a basket: other flowers in vases, mingled with globes and mathematical instruments, are scattered about the room. The view in the background extends into a gallery containing statues and pictures.

The other picture also represents the interior of a room ornamented with paintings. A lady is seated at a well-covered table, eating oysters, with much expression of enjoyment: opposite to her are two other females, one of whom holds a lyre, the other a cat; a servant is bringing fresh dishes; behind the

lady is a sideboard: the room contains, besides, a harpsichord and several musical instruments; on the ground a great number and variety of fowls.\*

The admirable picture in the Munich Gallery, in which he has represented himself walking in a garden with his second wife and his son, must also be mentioned here.

Having now considered Rubens as an *artist* in the wide and general sense, uniting the most extraordinary versatility of power with unequalled fertility of invention, it only remains for us to say a few words of him as a portrait painter.

Rubens, in his historical works, has not escaped the fate of all *sketchers*,—I mean of those artists

\* The meaning and intention of these two pictures it were vain to guess at in these latter times, and I cannot find that they have been engraved.

The above list of *tableaux de genre* from the pencil of Rubens might be considerably enlarged, but I will merely mention here, as a proof that he left no effect of nature unattempted, his well-known picture of “an old woman and a boy, seen by candle-light,” astonishing for its truth of feeling and execution. It was brought to England about the year 1804 by Mr. Delahante, and afterwards sold to Mr. Duncombe for two thousand guineas.—A. J.

whose works have been the product of their own imaginations alone, and who have neglected to refresh their minds by new contemplations of nature in detail as any particular case occurred, making especial studies for the purpose; the consequence of which has been a certain monotony in their forms and vacancy in their physiognomies, with occasional exaggeration in the marking of the characters and expression. But that he did, not like most other artists who took this direction, lose the feeling to appreciate, the power to render, the purest forms and truest aspects of nature, is proved by several of his *tableaux de genre*, and still more clearly by many of his portraits. The quantity of the latter is so great—about a hundred alone having been engraved—that we can only mention here some of the most excellent.

Many portraits of his earlier period are nearly allied in conception and execution to the family portrait in the Munich Gallery, which I have already praised so highly. To the finest of this class belong the portraits of Nicholas Rockox, the Burgomaster of Antwerp, and his wife, Adriana Perez, which adorned the wings of the picture of the Unbelief of St. Thomas, formerly

in the church of the Recollets at Antwerp, and now forming part of the collection of the Academy there. The simple and yet noble conception, so true to the life—the steady execution, the colouring so warm, so transparent, so full of nature, lend a high attraction to this picture.\*

Of a similar character, in many respects, is the portrait of Elizabeth of Bourbon, the wife of Philip IV. of Spain, in the Gallery of the Louvre: the conception is very fine; the union of precision with softness in the forms, and the delicacy and feeling in the colour, the harmony as a whole, are most admirable.

But undoubtedly we must place in the first rank the celebrated picture in the Palazzo Pitti, known under the title of the Four Philosophers, and which contains the portraits of Justus Lipsius, Hugo Grotius, Philip and Peter Paul Rubens. The heads are all conceived with such life and spirit, the execution is so broad and careful, that although Raphael's portrait of Leo X., and other works of the first Italian masters, hang in the same room, the spectator dwells upon it with the

\* "His is a fine portrait; the ear is remarkably well painted, and the anatomy of the forehead well understood. Her portrait has no merit but that of colour."—*Sir Joshua Reynolds*.



greatest satisfaction, and must acknowledge that it far excels all the others in vigorous drawing and splendid colouring.\* The portrait of Rubens himself† in the gallery of painters at Florence, which represents him as a man of about forty, is also a work of great value, and exhibits similar perfections.

But of all Rubens' portraits, perhaps, the most celebrated is the one called the *Chapeau de Paille*, at present the chief ornament of the fine collection of Sir Robert Peel in London. No picture justifies more than this the appellation which Rubens has obtained, of the painter of light. No one who has not beheld this masterpiece of painting can form any conception of the transparency and brilliancy with which the local colouring in the features and complexion, though under the shadow of a broad-brimmed Spanish beaver hat, are brought out and made to tell, while the different parts are rounded and relieved with the finest knowledge and use of reflected lights. The expression of those youthful features beaming with cheerfulness, is so full of life, and has such a perfect charm, that one is inclined to believe the tradition, that Rubens fell in love with

\* Engraved by Morel and Gregori.

† Engraved by Meulmeester and Gregori.

the original (a young girl of the Lundens family at Antwerp) whilst she was sitting to him. The treatment throughout displays a master hand capable of sporting with its subject and material. The very inappropriate name of Chapeau de Paille can only have been given to this picture in later days; for, according to the testimony of Mr. Nieuwenhuys, it was formerly known in the Netherlands under the title “*Net Spaansch Hoedje*.”\*

That even in his later days Rubens could relinquish that fervid redundance of style for which he had become remarkable, and lend to his conceptions all

\* Engraved by Reynolds in mezzotinto. The countenance of this Mademoiselle Lundens—“*qui, dans son temps, passa pour la plus belle personne des dix-sept Provinces,*” is not exceedingly captivating, rather lively and shrewd than attractive and intellectual. The picture, as a picture, is miraculous,—all but life itself. The bosom, as is usual with Rubens, the least successful in the management. Rubens, during his life, would never part with this picture;—it is simply designated in his catalogue as “*le portrait d’une demoiselle, les bras croisés.*” After the death of his widow it passed into the possession of the Lundens family, whose heir, M. Van Haveren, sold it in 1817 for 60,000 francs to another descendant of the family, M. Stiers d’Artselaar. At his death in 1822, it was sold by auction, and purchased by Mr. Nieuwenhuys for 36,000 florins, and brought to England, where, after being offered in vain to George IV., it was bought by Sir Robert Peel for 3,500 guineas.—A. J.

the softer graces of the affections, to his execution the most finished care, to his colouring all the modesty of nature, is proved by a picture at Blenheim, representing himself and his second wife, Helena Forman, strolling in a flower-garden : she is conducting a child in leading-strings. This representation of the innocent domestic happiness enjoyed by a person of noble character, mature age, and distinguished station, strikes the beholder so vividly, that it is sure to produce the most agreeable and soothing impressions on the mind, and I have no hesitation in pronouncing it one of the most successful family pieces in the world.\*

Of the numerous portraits which Rubens painted of his second wife, I will only mention two as particularly successful. In one of them, likewise at Blenheim, she is walking in the open air, splendidly attired, and followed by her page ; the dazzling tone of the flesh is particularly thrown out by a black border on her dress : the whole picture is incomparable for elegance and animation in design, as well as for splendour in the colouring.†

\* This picture was presented by the city of Brussels to the great Duke of Marlborough.

† Engraved by M<sup>r</sup>.Ardel.

In the other, which adorns the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, she is entering her bath, and only partially covered with a brown cloak. This is one of the most exquisite portraits of this master, for the careful execution and brilliancy of colouring.\*

Another work, not less valuable than either of those just mentioned, is the one in the Lichtenstein Gallery at Vienna, containing the portraits of his two eldest sons.† They are standing together in a confiding and graceful attitude, the youngest displaying his childish delight in the possession of a bird, the eldest holding a book in his hand.‡ It is difficult to know whether most to admire the life in the heads, the clearness and force in the colouring, or the careful execution and admirable impasto.§

\* Engraved by Prenner. The execution of this picture is magical ; the pellucid handling of the flesh, the exquisite complexion, and the redundant fair hair, the glow of life and youth, in contrast with the dark drapery, are wondrous ; and yet it is not a very attractive picture : the attitude struck me as awkward, and the drapery as ungraceful.—A. J.

† Engraved by Earlom.

‡ Albert and Nicholas, the only children by his first wife.

§ Engraved by Pichler.

Nothing conveys a more lively impression of the warm affections and domestic character of Rubens, than the numerous pictures which exist of

Lastly, I must mention the portrait of that celebrated collector of works of art, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, in the Bridgewater Gallery. He is in armour, with a commander's truncheon in his right hand. For delicacy in the drawing, and elevation in the conception, this portrait is inferior to none; for depth and glow in the colouring, it is perhaps superior to all.

Although Rubens was overwhelmed with important his wives and children: he seems to have delighted in multiplying and varying these loved objects under every variety of aspect. His two wives were both handsome women, fair, full-formed Flemish beauties; but, on comparing their portraits, the countenance of Elizabeth Brant appears the finer of the two, expressing a larger capacity of affection and intellect than that of Helena Forman, whom Rubens married at the age of fifty-six, and on whose juvenile charms (she was then only sixteen) he appears to have doted. In addition to the family pictures enumerated by Dr. Waagen, may be mentioned that exquisite portrait of Elizabeth Brant, with her infant son, now in the Munich Gallery; the full-length portrait of his eldest daughter, Clara-Engenia, when about eight years old, in the collection of the late Mr. van Schamps, at Ghent: a sumptuous picture for effect and colour. Clara-Eugenia married Philip van Parys, and from her the family of that name are descended. Also a portrait of his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, a buxom baby dressed in velvet and point-lace, and playing with toys, now in the Museum at Frankfort. She afterwards became a nun.—A. J.

commissions from princes, heads of religious houses, and private individuals, in all the civilised countries of Europe, yet he did not disdain to occupy himself with things of comparatively small value; he wished to promote a taste for art in all classes of society. Thus we possess engravings from eight drawings by his hand for a missal, which was published by Moretus; seventy-eight more from the legend of St. Ignatius of Loyola; fifty-eight for title-pages to different books; and a number more for emblematical representations, vignettes, lamps, &c. Rubens employed many of the principal copperplate engravers of his day, under his own eyes, that he might thus be able to extend a knowledge of his most valuable works far and wide in a manner worthy of them. This plan so far succeeded, that the peculiar and characteristic beauties of his works have been rendered in a more surprising and admirable manner by such engravers as P. Pontius, L. Vorstermann, S. a. Bolswert, and Soutmann, than by any later engravers. Not only have they most successfully rendered the excellent keeping and striking effect of the originals, but they have contrived most happily to imitate the peculiar treatment, and especially the brilliant light, in the flesh parts. Rubens himself

made some attempts at engraving; amongst them a St. Catharine, (from a painting for a ceiling,) and the portrait of a man in a fur dress, are the most valuable, and are treated in a very picturesque style.

Like other great painters, he was an architect too, and, besides his own house, the church and the college of the Jesuits in Antwerp were built from his designs. He proved, however, in this department, that he was not free from the taste for exaggeration and excess of ornament common in his time.

We are able to form some estimate of the astonishingly productive powers of Rubens, when we consider that about a thousand of his works have been engraved.\* The extraordinary number of his paintings adorn not merely the most celebrated public and private galleries, and various churches in Europe, but they have even found their way to America: in Lima especially there are several, and some of them of considerable value and excellence.† Yet of the

\* Including copies, the number of engravings from works of Rubens amount to more than one thousand five hundred.

† I have to thank his Excellency Alexander von Humboldt for the communication.

countless pictures everywhere attributed to Rubens, but a small proportion were entirely painted by his own hand;\* the others contain more or less of the workmanship of his pupils. Amongst these latter there exist remarkable distinctions, and they may be classed principally as follows:—

I. Pictures by Rubens himself, in which his pupils executed some of the less important parts.

II. Pictures which the pupils of Rubens painted after sketches by him, and to which he added here and there a few finishing strokes.

III. Copies of his pictures painted by his pupils, which he occasionally retouched.

IV. Paintings by very indifferent artists, made from engravings after Rubens, of which, according to Weyermann,† an enormous number were fabricated at Antwerp, and passed off upon Germans and Poles as originals by Rubens.‡

\* The greatest number of works begun and finished by his own hand are to be found in the galleries of Madrid, Antwerp, and Blenheim.

† Weyermann, vol. i. p. 268.

‡ We can now estimate the great difficulty of compiling a true critical catalogue of the genuine works by Rubens: and must, therefore, do justice to the zeal and diligence displayed in the work by Mr. John Smith, although many faults may be found in it.



It is principally owing to these last that we too often associate the ideas of Rubens with all that is coarse, rude, vulgar, and devoid of feeling, by which means this great painter has been unjustly depreciated.

But, even amongst those who are capable of estimating the peculiar greatness of Rubens, how many are there who, judging by the greater number of his pictures, are disposed to consider him as an artist who was governed and hurried onwards solely by his fiery and unbridled imagination, and who had never reflected calmly and maturely on the principles and nature of his art!—and yet it is certain that very few of the more modern artists have so thoroughly understood the peculiar laws of the style they had adopted, and have made such well-digested and admirable remarks upon it, as Rubens. Still less, however, should we expect that Rubens, whose delineation of form differs so widely from the antique, had studied the latter with the greatest zeal, and that he entertained the loftiest ideas respecting ancient art. These facts, joined to his works, prove most incontrovertibly that Rubens was all that an artist can be—in one word, a GENIUS. For, like the ocean, which ever

remains calm and still in its inmost recesses, whatever storms may sweep over its surface, thus with an artist of genius, that excitable element, the imagination, can be moved by a thousand appropriate incidents to the most affecting and passionate creations, whilst the mind within maintains its powers clear and undisturbed. Genius has also this attribute, that it is powerfully attracted and easily inspired by whatever is excellent; but, at the same time, that which is foreign to the natural turn, or what we should call the original temperament of genius, however admirable it may be, can never disturb it in its productions. I do not mean to assert that the studies which Rubens made from the antique were without all influence on his own art; but it is evident that they only influenced him through the truth and life and the intellectual power which characterise the ancient works of art, apart from the beauty of form. The most conspicuous proof of that deep insight into the nature of his art which Rubens possessed, and of his accurate study of the antique, is contained in a short Latin essay written by him, in which he expresses his sentiments on this subject, and how far he can recommend painters to study the ancient statues. De Piles

has the merit of printing this essay from a manuscript in the Latin language.\* I shall give here the most important part in a free translation, but add in a note the Latin text, which has great originality of expression.†

\* See De Piles, "Cours de Peinture par Principes." There does not appear to me any sufficient ground for doubting the genuineness of this essay, as some have done.

† "Aliis utilissima, aliis damnosa usque ad exterminium artis. Concludo tamen ad summam ejus perfectionem esse necessariam earum intelligentiam, imo imbibitionem, sed judiciose applicandum earum usum et omnino citra saxum. Nam plures imperiti et etiam periti non distinguunt materiam a forma, saxum a figura, nec necessitatem marmoris ab artificio. Una autem maxima est statuarum optimas utilissimas, ut viles inutiles esse, vel etiam damnosas; nam tyrones ex iis nescio quid crudi, terminati et difficilis molestæque anatomiae dum trahunt videntur proficere, sed in opprobrium naturæ, dum pro carne marmor coloribus tantum representant. Multa sunt enim notanda imo et vitanda etiam in optimis accidentia citra culpam artificis; præcipue differentia umbrarum, cum caro, pellis, cartilago sua diaphanitate multa leniant præcipitia in statuâ negredinis et umbræ, quæ sua densitate saxum duplicat inexorabiliter obvium. Adde quasdam maccaturas ad omnes motus variabiles et facilitate pellis aut dimissas aut contractas a statuariis vulgo evitatas, optimis tamen aliquando admissas, picturæ certo sed cum moderatione necessarias. Lumine etiam ab omni humanitate alienissimæ differunt lapideo splendore et aspera luce superficies magis elevante ac par est, aut saltem oculos fascinante. Ac quisquis sapienti discretionem separaverit, statuas

“ For some painters this is of the greatest use ;  
 “ for others ruinous, to the utter destruction of their  
 “ art. I am convinced, however, that to reach the  
 “ highest degree of perfection as a painter, it is ne-  
 “ cessary not only to be acquainted with the ancient  
 “ statues, but we must be inwardly imbued with the  
 “ thorough comprehension of them. An insight into  
 “ the laws which pertain to them is necessary before  
 “ they can be turned to any real account in paint-  
 “ ing ; this will prevent the artist from transplanting  
 “ to the canvass that which in sculpture is dependent  
 “ on the material employed : marble for instance, &c.  
 “ Many inexperienced, and indeed experienced painters,  
 “ do not distinguish the *material* from the *form* which  
 “ it expresses, the stone from the figure which is  
 “ carved in it : that which the artist forces from the  
 “ dead marble, from the universal and intrinsic laws  
 “ of art which are independent of it. One leading rule

cominus amplectetur. Nam quid in hoc erroneo sæculo degeneres pos-  
 sumus ? Quam vilis genius nos humi detinet ab heroico illo imminutos  
 ingenio judicio !”—After this, the essay contains only general speculations  
 on the causes of the present degeneracy of the human race, and gives  
 very justly, as the principal ones, the imperfect developement of the  
 human frame in latter days, through idleness and sensuality ; whereas  
 the ancients had their gymnastic exercises.

“ may be laid down, that, inasmuch as the best statues  
“ of antiquity are of great value for the painter, the  
“ inferior ones are not only worthless, but mischie-  
“ vous ; for whilst beginners fancy they perform won-  
“ ders if they can borrow from these statues, and trans-  
“ plant something hard, heavy, with sharp outlines and  
“ an exaggerated anatomy to their canvass ; this can  
“ only be done by outraging the truth of nature,  
“ since, instead of representing flesh with colours, they  
“ do but give colour to marble.

“ In studying even the best antique statues, the  
“ painter must consider and avoid many things which  
“ are not connected with the art of the sculptor, but  
“ solely with the material in which he worked. I  
“ may mention particularly the difference in the  
“ shading. In nature, owing to the transparency of  
“ the flesh, the skin, and the cartilages, the shading  
“ of many parts is moderated, which in sculpture ap-  
“ pear hard and abrupt, for the shadows become  
“ doubled, as it were, owing to the natural and un-  
“ avoidable thickness of the stone. To this must be  
“ added, that certain less important parts which lie  
“ on the surface of the human body, as the veins,

“ small folds of the skin,\* which change their ap-  
 “ pearance with every movement, and which, owing  
 “ to the pliancy of the skin, become easily extended or  
 “ contracted, are not expressed at all in the works of  
 “ sculptors in general, though it is true that sculptors  
 “ of high talent have marked them in some degree,  
 “ The painter, however, must never omit to introduce  
 “ them, making use of proper discretion.† In the  
 “ manner, too, in which the lights fall, statues are  
 “ totally different from nature, for the natural bril-  
 “ liancy of marble, and its own light, throws out the  
 “ surface far more strongly than in nature, and even  
 “ dazzles the eye. He who has thoroughly attended  
 “ to these differences cannot do better than devote  
 “ himself, with all his energy, to the study of the  
 “ antique statues. For what can we degenerate mor-  
 “ tals do in these perverse times? How great is the  
 “ contrast between the petty spirit which chains us

\* This, I believe, is the meaning of the word *maccatura*, which doubt-  
 less is connected with the Italian word *macca*, superfluity. It is not  
 to be found in the glossary of Duchange.—*Waagen*.

† It is one of the faults of Rubens that he has often introduced these  
 accidental effects of nature *without* discretion. His draperies, also, as  
 Sir Joshua Reynolds has well remarked, are not sufficiently ideal : it is not  
 properly drapery in the artistic sense, but silk, satin, or woollen.—A. J.

“ to the world and its cares, and that sublime, almost  
 “ instinctive insight into the very life and soul of nature  
 “ which the ancients possessed !”

What grand ideas Rubens had formed of the ancient Greek painters, are apparent from a passage in his letter to Hadrian Junius, dated August 1, 1637, in which he thanks the latter for having sent him his work on the painting of the ancients.\* After lamenting how insufficient and deceitful the conceptions must be which we form through mere written accounts of the ancient Greek painters, he continues, “ For who  
 “ amongst us, if he were to attempt in reality to repre-  
 “ sent a celebrated work of Apelles or Timanthes, such  
 “ as Pliny describes them, but would produce some-

\* This letter, of which the beginning and conclusion are in the Dutch language, but the rest in Latin, is to be found in several editions of Junius, particularly in the Rotterdam edition of 1694, in Weyermann, and the Latin, too, in Fiorillo. The extract above stands thus in the original :—“ Nam quotusquisque nostrum si præclarum aliquod Apellis aut Timanthis opus a Plinio aut aliis auctoribus graphice descriptum, pro rei dignitate oculis subjicere tentatus, aliquid non insulsum aut a veterum majestate non alienum præstabit ; sed genio suo quisque indulgens, museum aliquid pro Opimiano illo dulcè amaro promit, et injuriam magnis illis manibus affert, quos ego veneratione summâ prosequor, et vestigia euntium potius adoro, quam vel sola cogitatione assequi me posse ingenue profiteor.

“ thing absurd, or perfectly foreign to the exalted  
“ greatness of the ancients? Each one, relying on his  
“ own powers, would produce some wretched, crude,  
“ unfermented stuff, instead of an exquisite old wine,  
“ uniting strength and mellowness, outraging those  
“ great spirits whom I endeavour reverently to follow,  
“ satisfied, however, to honour the marks of their  
“ footsteps, instead of supposing—I acknowledge it  
“ candidly—that I can ever attain to their eminence,  
“ even in mere conception.”

With such views, his predilection for ancient works of art was naturally very great. He caused drawings to be made of the most valuable antique monuments in Rome and Lombardy, and he intended to publish a work containing engravings of the finest antique cameos; for which six plates, with twenty-one cameos, (among them, the Gems Augustea and Tiberiana,) were found ready after his death.

However pressing his occupations, Rubens allowed nothing to interrupt the continuance of studies connected with the scientific departments of his art, as perspective, optics, anatomy, and the rules of proportion. A book was found amongst the property he left behind him, containing written remarks on these sub-



jects, accompanied with drawings.\* This book contained, besides, a great number of interesting studies: men and women, actuated by various motives and impulses, according to the influence of different passions and particular circumstances: and sketches after paintings by Raphael and other artists, with passages from Virgil and the poets, who had treated of the same subjects written underneath, by way of comparison.

As Rubens united to such great and various knowledge the disposition to communicate it to others in the most friendly and candid manner, it was natural that young painters of talent, who were admitted into his atelier, should soon attain a high degree of skill and cultivation. The number of pupils formed under

\* This book is said to be in Paris, and an edition of it was to have been published in the year 1744. (*Catal. raisonné de M. Quintin de l'Orangerie, par Fr. Gersaint.*) A copy, made with the most laborious fidelity by a Mr. Johnson, was presented to the Antiquarian Society of London. The work "*Théorie de la figure humaine, &c., ouvrage traduit du Latin de P. P. Rubens, avec XLIV. planches d'après les desseins de ce célèbre artiste.*" (Paris, 1703-4,) is probably but an extract from the book mentioned above. Another book of studies was published by Paul Pontius, in 20 sheets. A third, containing the studies of thirty-one heads, is engraved by Count Caylus: the title falsely attributes them to Van Dyck, though only two of the heads are after him.—See *Basan*, p. 244.

his tuition was very great; and although no one amongst them inherited his creative powers and his brilliant imagination, they all resembled him more or less in his manner of viewing nature, in his style of colouring, and in his admirable technical skill. It is easy to become convinced of this in a most agreeable manner by paying a visit to the Chateau, in a wood not far from the Hague. A saloon in this Chateau has been decorated by the pupils of Rubens, in the manner of the fresco-paintings of interiors in Italy. The object of the whole is the glorification of the House of Orange, by means of allegorical figures and portraits. The principal picture, one of the largest oil-paintings in the world, is from the pencil of J. Jordaens, and represents the triumph of Prince Frederick Henry: the keeping and effect of this admirable work, in which the four grays drawing the triumphal chariot of the prince are most strikingly painted, are wonderful. The next in rank is a *Quos ego*, likewise by Jordaens. Only one of the pictures was executed by Rubens himself, the *Forge of the Cyclops*, very brown in tone. Most of the other pictures are by the hand of Theodore Van Thulden, who in these works has emulated his illustrious

master in the force and brilliance of his colouring : the same may be said of a picture by Van Dyck. If Rubens, therefore, caused his style of painting in the historical department to become general in the Netherlands, through these and other masters, of whom we will here only enumerate Caspar de Kroyer, a contemporary, whose style was freely formed after that of Rubens, Peter Van Mol, Abraham Diepenbeck, Cornelius Schut, and Erasmus Quellinus ; so in the other branches of painting, there was not one over which he did not exercise, directly or indirectly, a powerful influence. As painters of animals and hunting-pieces, Franz Snyders, Paul de Vos, Jan Fyt, and, in their large pictures, the two brothers Weenix, followed in his footsteps. His manner of treating portraits was still farther perfected by Van Dyck, who was imitated again by Cornelius de Vos, and others, and even by Kneller and Sir Peter Lely. Through another pupil, David Teniers the elder, a new path—that of the humorous or grotesque—was struck out and followed up to a degree of perfection never since attained. Pictures like that of the above-mentioned “ Garden of Love ” had, without doubt, a decided influence on the earlier painters of the so-

styled conversation-pieces, on Terburg and Gerard Dow, for instance, who painted scenes of domestic and elegant life with exquisite perfection, and inimitable finish of execution. And, lastly, in landscape-painting, his pupil Wildens was followed by Jacob Van Artois and Huysman in grandeur of conception; while Lucas Van Uden, in the faithful and masterly delineation of the scenery of his native land, was the precursor of Everdingen, Ruysdael, and Waterloo.

Thus was the art of painting, in the Netherlands, remodelled in every department by the energies of a single great and gifted mind. Thus was RUBENS the originator of its second great epoch, to which we are indebted for such numerous and masterly performances in every branch of the art.

THE END.

LONDON :

JOHNSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.











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